Political Art of the Papacy: Visual Representations of the Donation of Constantine in the Early Modern Period

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
on the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History of Art)
in the University of Michigan
2013

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Acknowledgments

The research period of this project brought me great intellectual joy. This would not have happened without the assistance of many professionals to whom I am much indebted. My deep gratitude to the staffs of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (with special thanks to Dott. Paolo Vian), the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, the Archivio di Stato Roma, the Biblioteca Angelica, the Biblioteca Casanatense, the Biblioteca Centrale di Roma, the Bibliotheca Hertziana, the Biblioteca di Storia dell'Arte et Archeologia, the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome, the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, the Departement des Arts Graphique and the Departement des Objets d'Art of the Louvre. I would also like to thank to the curators of the Kunstkammer Department of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, especially to Dr. Konrad Schlegel who generously informed me on the file of the Constantine Cabinet.

The project was born and completed as it is in Michigan. I would like to thank all members of my committee. Tom Willette deeply believed in the project and my ideas from the very beginning and offered great advice during our long conversations. Besides her involvement in the project, Megan Holmes reminded me about the primacy of images and about my duty to keep things “down to earth.” Louise Stein generously gave me advice on a variety of matters, and always alerted me to the intersecting threads of music and fine arts. Celeste Brusati, while graciously listening to the development of this

project, cultivated my collateral interest in perspective through stimulating discussions and always put things “in perspective” in the field of art history. Achim Timmermann introduced the European factor into the equation, and showed investment in my project and my scholarly future.

My thanks to Professor Stefano Zen for his kindness of putting his fabulous work on Baronius at my disposal at once. Deep gratitude to Giancarlo Fiorenza who has unassumingly advised me in my graduate career and showed renewed interest in my work (and who also graciously read and commented on sections of this dissertation).

In the United States, the collection of the Newberry Library proved essential for my research. Many thanks to the professional staff that assisted me during my visits as a Short-Term Newberry Fellow, Newberry Library Grantee, and Mellon Italian Paleography Institute participant. Special thanks to Paul Gehl, the expert of the early-modern special collection, and to Diane Dillon, Carla Zecher, and Karen Christianson who introduced me to the resources and facilities of the institution.

My home institution, University of Michigan, holds a fine rare book collection that I became extensively engrossed in while I was in Michigan. Thanks to the people of University of Michigan Library, and to those at the 7-Fast who made my life incredibly easy whatever my location in the world. The Fine Arts Library staff was immensely helpful. Even though I name here only Deidre Spencer, I want to thank all of them. Jeannie Worrall, Kim Wolf, Debbie Fitch, Chris Hobson, Christy Elkins, Luciana Borbely, and Jeff Craft magically solved several of my administrative questions. My fellow Tappanies showed collegiality throughout the years, for which I am grateful to them. Special thanks go to a trio that has positively marked my existence at Tappan from

the very beginning: Anna, Bea, and Dragana.

I would also want to thank to Paul Barron and Louis Cicciarelli from the Gayle Moriss Sweetland Center for Dissertation Writing Institute for their advice during my graduate studies at the University of Michigan, and especially during the time spent at the Institute as a Dissertation Writing Institute fellow.

Many thanks to Professor Emeritus Ilene Forsyth not only for her stimulating scholarship but also for her generosity in supporting a fellowship that enabled me to do much of my research. Equally, thanks to the people supporting the Cracchiolo Fellowship in Italian Sacred Art. This fellowship helped me tremendously to conclude my on-site research.

My Roman "grupetto" has treated me with great company on my travels and in conversation, which makes me crave planning new encounters and adventures. To my Parisian friends Marie, Anca, and Jean, thanks for their hospitality, walks, and great conversations at the dinner table. Equally, hospitality and wonderful conversations always welcomed me in the home of Louise Stein and Gary Supanich.

I present my warm thanks to my parents for their continuous encouragement, for trusting my judgment, and for teaching me the importance of balancing things in life. I extend my warm thanks to my dear sister who introduced me to the wonders of writing by using the surface of a satin quilt. Finally, to Uri, for everything that he has offered me over the years and for his exuberance in living up this project at the same intensity I did despite the too many miles that often separated us. This is for him, a simple gift.

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List of Abbreviations

ASR, Archivio di Stato Roma

AVS, Archivio Segreto Vaticano

BAV, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

Abstract

The famous forged document known as the Donation of Constantine has stirred interest from the inception of its critical fate not long after its creation in the eighth century. The document, most likely a product of the papal scriptorium, stipulated the endowment of the papacy by the first Christian emperor Constantine (306-336 AD) with imperial prerogatives in the form of regalia and territories. In the early modern period, the debate over the authenticity of and the claims advanced by the document intensified increasingly under the pressure of religious divisions and political tensions in Europe, leading to an impressive corpus of writings dealing with the matter. While modern scholars, especially historians of the Church, have explored the written discourse on the Donation of Constantine, the subtle but solid contribution of the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine to this heated debate in the early modern period has not captured attention. Neither have the motives of the explosion of Constantinian imagery in this period nor the strategies employed to construct the image of Constantine been sufficiently studied.

This dissertation explores the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine within the entire spectrum of Constantinian imagery produced in Rome, mostly at the papal court, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The visual repertoire includes works by celebrated artists of the time such as Raphael, Pietro da Cortona, Rubens, and Bernini, as well as by less famous or even anonymous practitioners. The objects under scrutiny were

produced in a variety of media (fresco, painting, sculpture, exquisite furniture, and print) and for different contexts (for public display in papal palaces, piazzas, basilicas, and for private consumption through public dissemination). The investigation of this rich visual material is conducted from the perspectives of the commissioners, the artists who executed it, and the viewers who were supposed to engage with it. Each chapter from the third to the sixth analyzes a different approach to the visual transposition of the Donation theme, whereas the second chapter examines how the historical figure of Constantine was exploited in defense of the Donation of Constantine. The contention is that the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine, central to the political art of the papacy, was employed not only to vouch for the veracity of the document, but primarily to introduce supplementary arguments into the debate focused on the document and, more generally and momentously, on papal prerogatives. The principal strategies utilized, as this dissertation shows, were exegesis and dissimulation. Furthermore, this study proposes that when the debate became so vehement that a defense of the document, either in texts or in images, would have been profoundly detrimental to the papacy, other Constantinian episodes were sought in order to create substitutive "host episodes" and "proxies" for the Donation of Constantine.

Chapter I

Introduction

The Arch of Constantine in Rome (fig. I. 1), bracketed by the Coliseum and the Forum, is the monument closest to its original appearance of all those erected in the Constantinian period (306-337 AD). Unlike other imperial triumphal arches still extant in the Forum (those of Septimius Severus and Titus), the Arch of Constantine could rightfully be considered a Christian monument. Built to commemorate Constantine's victory over Maxentius in 312, the arch implicitly alludes to the divine means by which Constantine triumphed: "the Vision of the Cross." According to the biography composed by Constantine's contemporary Eusebius (ca. 263-339 AD), a cross appeared to Constantine before the battle and assured him of victory. The vision would lead to the conversion of Constantine into a Christian and, moreover, into the first Christian emperor. While the legendary character of the story would raise credibility issues throughout the centuries, Constantine's adherence to Christianity had historical grounds, and the implications of Constantine's conversion were, without a doubt, significant. As the historian Paul Veyne has put it, without Constantine, Christianity would have remained a sect. [1] Constantine's adoption of Christianity led to a massive campaign of constructing churches and other ecclesiastical establishments necessary for Christian

[1] Paul Veyne, *When Our World Became Christian, 312-394*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Polity, 2010).

practices. This dissertation, however, engages not with the "historical" Constantine but with the Constantinian period as it was perceived many centuries later in the early modern period. The Arch of Constantine is a useful point of departure for considering the early modern reception of Constantine. While the "Vision of the Cross" enjoyed great diffusion among Christian believers and was to become a critical scene in Constantinian cycles, none of the sculptural panels of the Arch of Constantine depicted it. However, the role of the vision in the victory over Maxentius and the presence of the cross engraved in one of the two inscriptions on the arch (added reportedly at Constantine's request) encouraged many people to consider the monument a work of Christian art. This also explains, I suggest, the absence of any additional ornamentation for the arch during ceremonies of the *possesso*—the papal rite of investiture. It is worth noting that the Arch of Constantine functioned as a city gate (fig. I. 2), a condition that would have reflected, metaphorically, Constantine's character as a kind of threshold figure, standing between the ancient "heathen" and the emerging Christian world. For many in the period under scrutiny, the Arch of Constantine signaled the last triumph organized in Rome for an emperor. Proof that this tradition came to an end with Constantine originated in a document known as the Donation of Constantine.

This study considers the significance of the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine in the political debate that centered on the efforts of the papacy to justify its rights to temporal power. It investigates the Donation theme within the larger corpus of both Constantinian imagery and sources traditionally not studied in scholarship on Constantine. This dissertation focuses on representations of the Donation, considering them both as components of Constantinian cycles and as autonomous subjects in their

own right.

The Donation of Constantine: the Fate of a Forgery

The famous eighth-century forgery known as the Donation of Constantine was created, probably in the papal scriptorium, as part of a strategy of extending and legitimizing the temporal power of the papacy.[2] The Donation of Constantine is reputedly one of the most famous, if not the most famous, textual forgery in European history.[3] The document, of which no "original" is known, records that the first Christian Emperor Constantine the Great granted imperial prerogatives to the papacy, namely regalia and territories. Constantine presented his act of donation to Pope Sylvester I (314-335 AD) in gratitude for Sylvester's mediating role in curing his leprosy through the sacrament of baptism. The donation was to stand in perpetuity. Although the validity of the document had been contested during the Middle Ages it was most severely compromised by Lorenzo Valla's critique issued in his *Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine* (*De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione*, 1440).[4] However, it was the availability of Valla's text through Ulrich Von Hutten's print edition of 1519 that

[2] Scholars have proposed other locations than the papal scriptorium for the fabrication of the document on the basis of linguistic inconsistencies. These other locations proposed are German territories or even other places in Rome. For instance, Johannes Fried contends that the document was edited in a Frankish milieu after the coronation of Charlemagne. Pietro de Leo has identified the monastery of San Silvestro in Capite in Rome as the place where the Donation was produced, on the premise that the author of the forgery was a Greek monk. De Leo thus follows Cesare Baronius' supposition regarding the authorship (Cesare Barnoius, *Annales*, III, 1592). For these hypotheses and further bibliography, see Johannes Fried and Wolfram Brandes. *Donation of Constantine and Constitutum Constantini: The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and Its Original Meaning* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 54-69; Pietro de Leo, *Il Constitutum Constantini: compilazione agiografica del sec. VIII* (Reggio Calabria: Editori Meridionali Riuniti, 1974). For Baronius, see Chapter IV.

[3] See Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 1990, 22-25.

[4] The most recent modern edition of Valla's *De falso credita* in English, and to which I refer throughout this dissertation, is: Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation of Constantine*, trans. G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007).

enabled the exploitation of Valla's criticism by seminal anti-Roman writers, and especially Martin Luther, who put pressure on the papacy.[5] Indeed, Valla's treatise opened a debate on the Donation that continued for almost three centuries.[6] While the papacy has never officially declared the document inauthentic, it ceased, gradually, to make explicit reference to the Donation in verbal or visual statements after important clerics of the Roman Curia, such as Cesare Baronius, began to recognize its specious character in the 1580s and 1590s.

The papacy, in fact, had much at stake in the Donation of Constantine. The Constantinian epoch was regarded as foundational for the Roman Church.[7] Indeed, the papacy made the Donation of Constantine the foundational narrative of its institution as a secular political power. As this dissertation demonstrates, in visual art the Donation was rhetorically potent for the advancement of papal claims, despite repeated challenges to the veracity of the historical document. The overarching argument of this dissertation is that in the early modern period the papacy utilized visual means both to defend and to reaffirm the authenticity of the Donation. Once the credibility of the document was

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[5] Ulrich von Hutten, Bartholomaeus Pincernus, Lorenzo Valla, Nicholas, Antoninus, and Hieronymus Paulus Catalanus, *Donationis, quae Constantini dicitur priuilegium Bartholomeo Pincerno de monte arduo ad Iulioum. II. Pont. Max. interprete* (Basel: Andreas Cratander, 1519). A short publication run of Von Hutten's edition was issued in 1517. Von Hutten's edition is the *editio princeps* of Valla's *De falso credita*. Recently, David Whitford has proposed that the influence of Valla's *Declamatio* on Luther was even more profound than scholars have hitherto thought, pointing out that Valla helped Luther to crystallize his identification of the Antichrist with the pope begining in 1520. The author has traced "internal evidence" that buttresses his hypothesis. David Whitford, "The Papal Antichrist", 26-52.

[6] See Domenico Maffei, *La donazione di Costantino nei giuristi medievali* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1964); Giovanni Antonazzi, *Lorenzo Valla e la polemica sulla donazione di Costantino* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1985); and Gian Maria Vian, *La donazione di Costantino* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004), 129-168.

[7] Scholars have recognized the foundational role ascribed to the Constantinian epoch in ecclesiastical histories. See William McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 346-356; Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco and Angela Cipriani. *The Art of the Popes: From the Vatican Collection: How Pontiffs, Architects, Painters, and Sculptors Created the Vatican* (New York: Greenwich House, 1983).

challenged within the Curia itself at the end of the sixteenth century, the papacy fostered the use of "proxy" episodes to stand in for the Donation that were drawn from elsewhere in the history of Constantine's life. These proxy episodes had the virtue of transmitting the message of the Donation without referring directly to the literal claims made in the controversial document.

The document of the Donation and Valla's treatise on the forgery, *De falso credita*, have long stimulated scholars in different disciplines.[8] Most scholars influenced by the fact that Valla composed his treatise while in service at the court of King Alfonso of Naples, as well as the subsequent usage of his arguments in the learned debate on the Donation, have focused attention on the debate over the Donation of Constantine in the context of royal courts and in specialized politico-juridical discourse. Although this dissertation is not dedicated to Valla's treatise, a number of original observations regarding logical and juridical aspects of Valla's *De falso credita* are scattered throughout the following chapters. The topic of the Donation, however, extended toward other social contexts and toward other types of discourses. While some scholars have looked to other types of discourses for evidence of the wider reception of the Donation, there is still unexplored textual material that shows the complexity of the debate on the Donation. For instance, Dante's outcry against Constantine's enrichment of the papacy through the

[8] The most substantial scholarship on the Donation of Constantine addresses the Donation rather obliquely and primarily concerns Valla's treatise. The Valla scholarship follows principally three directions: the treatise (*De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione*), the treatise as part of Valla's oeuvre, and the reception of Valla's treatise in different European territories. Among the standard studies on Valla see: Salvatore Camporeale, *Lorenzo Valla. Umanesimo e teologia* (Florence: Istituto nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1972); Salvatore Camporeale, "Lorenzo Valla's *Oratio* on the Pseudo-Donation of Constantine: Dissent and Innovation in Early Renaissance Humanism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 1 (Jan., 1996), 9-26 (this article originated in a symposium on Valla, the papers of which were published in this issue of the *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Vol. 57, No. 1)).

Donation routinely surfaces in modern scholarship, but Christine de Pizan's reference to the Donation as an example of the inconstancy of men with regard to material temptations has been overlooked.[9] More significantly, the debate on the Donation profoundly pervaded not only the juridical discourse on the papal prerogatives but also, as this dissertation demonstrates, the more widely disseminated information on Constantine. This dissertation does not present a complete history of the discourse on the Donation in the early modern period. Rather, it engages with the discourse in relation to various political theories set forth in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in order to elucidate the contribution of visual material to this discourse.

The art historical interest in the Donation has surfaced only incidentally in studies of specific Constantinian cycles which feature a visual narrative of the Donation. A consideration of the Donation as a visual theme in the political art of the papacy, with a rhetorical potential to enrich debates on the Donation, has not been addressed by scholars. This dissertation looks at the extended "career" of the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine at the papal court in the early modern period, from the second decade of the sixteenth century to the 1670s. My focus on the papal court is motivated by the fact that it was the papacy that commissioned nearly all of the visual representations of the Donation and the related proxy images. The importance of examining these works of art executed over 150-year period lies in the manner in which the Donation theme was utilized by a succession of papal regimes to advance their political agendas. The theme reveals the struggle of the papacy to legitimize its claim to secular power in the troubled

[9] Dante, *Inferno*, XIX, 115-117. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, II.49.4. For Dante, see Luigi Banfi,"Costantino in Dante," in *Costantino il Grande: dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, ed. Giorgio Bonamente and Franca Fusco, vol.1 (Macerata: E.G.L.E., 1992), 91-103.

European polico-religious milieu of the period and the dynamism of early modern political discourse.

This dissertation also studies the tensions between history as traditionally-given truth and history as externally-verifiable truth. While the Donation belongs to the former category, the latter was abundantly explored in Christian archaeology in this period. The emerging scholarly methods of Christian archeology were assiduously employed for excavating material remnants of the Constantinian era. They provided proofs for Constantine's benevolent acts in favor of Christianity. In addition to these particular innovative approaches to dealing with the past that had the potential to challenge certain historical givens, one may ask how early modern people looked at the past in comprehensive ways and the role played by images. By questioning the status of images as historical evidence, Francis Haskell has shed light on the work of historians who utilized images for the study of the past. While the early modern period is mostly represented through the analysis of antiquarian works, Haskell's study offers a repertoire that invites a more nuanced interrogation of the role of the image in the perception of the past.[10] The notion of "the past" has also been evaluated through the concepts of anachronism and ahistoricity. The Donation of Constantine has recently solicited scholarly attention in studies of such topics thanks to Valla's *De falso credita* and to visual representations of the Donation theme. Scholars have pointed out the method of inquiry Valla adopted for his critique of the Donation as a measure of his interest in

[10] Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

anachronism.[11] With regard to the visual representation of the Donation, two recent interventions, both in a volume dedicated to the issue of "recreating ancient history," are worth mentioning when considering historical criticism in the representation of the past.[12] In his essay for the volume, Anton Boschloo deals with the representation of history in art theory of the early modern period. He concludes that, except for the clerical writers who were rigorously observing the Tridentine decrees, artists and art theoreticians were not concerned with questions about the absolute truth of history.[13] His analysis of some of the major writings on visual art from the early modern period calls attention to the view that it was the artist's imagination that allowed the image to become a prototype, transcend time and the status of a mere historical event. However, one must be aware that all authors mentioned in Boschloo's essay who give such power to the imagination, such as Gian Paolo Lomazzo, recommended the use of canonical historical texts as inspirational sources. Aligned with Boschloo's ideas, Jan L. de Jong examines the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, where a Donation of Constantine was frescoed early in the papacy of Clement VII (1524-1525, fig. III. 11), and concludes that a certain understanding of Aristotelian categories of universals and particulars explains the creation of ahistorical, universal interpretations of historical episodes in the Sala (fig. III.

[11] Peter Burke, "The Sense of Anachronism from Petrarch to Poussin," in *Time in the Medieval World*, ed. Chris Humphrey and W. M. Ormrod (Rochester, N.Y.: York Medieval Press, 2001); Charles Dempsey "Response: *Historia* and Anachronism in Renaissance Art," *The Art Bulletin* 87, no.3 (2005), 420-1. For a recent critique of scholarship that attributes an interest in anachronism to Valla, see Margreta de Grazia, "Anachronism," in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, ed. Brian Cummings and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 13-32.
[12] Karl A. E. Enenkel and Jan L. de Jong, *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
[13] Anton Boschloo, "The Representation of History in Artistic Theory in the Early Modern Period," in *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Jan L. de Jong (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1-26.

7-11).[14] Jan de Jong believes that the elevation of the particular historical event to universal status meant that historical accuracy did not matter, since the particular is subsumed in the universal. The thesis of universals and particulars is seductive and theoretically apt, but it raises the question of how the representation of the Donation of Constantine (and by extension, other royal donations) as universal could have been legitimate, given that the Church was deeply concerned with the justification of this particular event.

The Donation of Constantine may have been considered in the period to belong to the category of fable and was thus not strictly a matter of historical truth. The category of fable might have been invoked inasmuch as it augmented the philosophical search of poetry for universals and negated its inclusion within history (particulars). Yet, fable would fail to bolster the particular claim the Church was eager to assert explicitly. My own project delves into the Post-Tridentine period's quest for historical accuracy and the resulting doubts about the authenticity of the Donation within the Curia as well. However, it does not attempt to project the Post-Tridentine agenda retroactively on the early sixteenth-century representations of the Donation but proposes to examine the long-term role of Donation theme in justifying the pragmatic claims of the papacy.

A complicated question emerges when thinking about the status of a visual representation of a forgery or "false" history. The visual representation of the Donation

[14] Jan L. de Jong, "Universals and Particulars. History Painting in the "Sala di Costantino" in the Vatican Palace," in *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literature of the Early Modern Period*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Jan L. de Jong (Leiden: Brill, 2001). I am wondering if his preoccupation with universals made him misdate and misplace the second Donation commissioned by Sixtus V for the Lateran. On the same Sala, see also de Jong's recent book: Jan L. de Jong, *The Power and the Glorification: Papal Pretensions and the Art of Propaganda in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 70-91.

was not a mere invention confined to the realm of fiction and enjoyed as such. When truth is claimed by means of a visual representation based on a forgery, the claim affects the visual representation itself by extracting it from the realm of fiction and investing it with verisimilitude. However, not everybody in the early modern period considered such pictures in this way. A visual representation of the Donation could have fallen into the category of *istoria* regardless of its epistemological status. Once the new writings on sacred art appeared in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, veracity in the depiction of sacred subjects was highly recommended.[15] Was a representation of the Donation of Constantine sacred subject-matter? The theme involved matters related to the Church, which categorized it effectively as sacred history so long as the Church backed the veracity of the document. This sort of "internal veracity" led to a suspension of the discussion of the document as a forgery. Despite the fact that the Donation belongs to the culture of forgery, the refusal to acknowledge it as such on the part of the papacy—the almost exclusive commissioner of Donation scenes in this period—is significant. This suggests that the Donation theme should be seen from a positive rather than a negative perspective, as a construct of veracity rather than as evidence of falsified history. A visual representation of the Donation bolstered the argument for the veracity of the historical event and likewise of the document. In the early modern period, the Donation was a given, with a long established tradition; it was not a fabrication of that time. This dissertation deals with contemporary art representing a forged past rather than with art

[15] See also my expanded discussion of this question in Chapter III.

forging a past.[16]

The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

The period under consideration here is labeled "early modern" not simply for convenience but to designate a more inclusive temporal framework. Although the principal visual material spans from the second decade of the sixteenth century to the 1670s, the textual evidence extends before and after the limits of these two centuries.[17] Major Quattrocento voices, such as those of the humanists Valla and Bartolomeo Platina, and that of the artist Lorenzo Ghiberti, emerge occasionally. Textual sources extending well into the eighteenth century frequently come to our aid for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries form the core of the period under study here. This timeframe is not typical in an art historical periodization but it agrees with temporal categories conceived of in other disciplines. Already in the nineteenth century, the historian Leopold von Ranke treated the pontificates of the sixteenth and seventeenth century together due to the ongoing response to Protestantism.[18] More recently, Michel Foucault, in his analysis of the intricate relationship between politics and power, considered the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a unique module due to the consistency of key social structures throughout the two centuries.[19] One of the

[16] Therefore, the question here is not directed towards forged artifacts. For this aspect in the early modern period, and further bibliography, see Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
[17] With regard to the confines of the early modern period in Rome, the end of the pontificate of Alexander VII would coincide with that of the period according to recent scholarship but the first two decades of the sixteenth century float somewhere in the middle of the period. See Portia Prebys ed., *Early Modern Rome 1341-1667: Proceedings of a Conferences Held on May 13-15, 2010 in Rome*. (Ferrara: Edisai, 2011).
[18] Leopold von Ranke. *History of the Popes, Their Church and State, and Especially of Their Conflicts with Protestantism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. E. Foster (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1896).
[19] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 78-109.

fundamental forms of political discourse in that time—and which is featured throughout the dissertation—was dissimulation.[20]

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be seen together as a period in which European political powers sought to preserve old forms of government and to strengthen the feudal system despite the emergence of modern states. It was the articulation of the feudal theories of sovereignty in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that inspired Michel Foucault to group the two centuries together.[21] The Church was one of the major European political powers. As Paolo Prodi has noticed, although the Church focused on transforming the *Patrimonia Petri* into the Papal States beginning in the fifteenth century, the Church continued to rely on medieval political structures into the next two centuries.[22] The updating of the political institution of the Church as an organ of power required the preservation of the Donation of Constantine as a defining legend of the Papal States. Nevertheless, the Donation of Constantine was not the only act of donation by a secular leader to be celebrated in texts and images by the Church. Other historical donations appeared newly significant. Those included the donations of Charlemagne (a sequel to that of his father Pepin), emperor Otto I, Peter of Aragon, and Countess Matilda of Canossa. I call this early modern revival of donations of historical rulers the "donation phenomenon." According to the Church, each of these donations guaranteed the papacy specific territorial and political control. By invoking these different donations, the papacy justified its rights. The activation of the donation phenomenon by the papacy in the

[20] Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 6.
[21] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 103.
[22] Paolo Prodi. *Il Sovrano Pontefice: Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tends to confirm the theory of social historians that Italian political structures, including the Church, embarked upon a process of re-feudalization rather than moving towards the modern state system.[23]

Historians of the Church have described the catalytic and transformational roles of the religious movement known as the Reformation and the major Catholic response to it, the Council of Trent (1545-1563). As is well known, the term Counter-Reformation has come to seem misleading to many scholars. Among the alternatives, the term that reflects better the complex actions of the Church as an institution engaged in a multifaceted assessment of its constitutions is John O'Malley's "Reformation of the Catholic Church" or "Catholic Reformation."[24] While this is not the place to embark on such a topic, it should be noted that visual representations of the Donation of Constantine have been associated with the opposition of the Church to Protestantism. The first major visual representation of the theme, the one in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, has been interpreted as a direct response to Luther's criticism of the Donation of Constantine (fig. III. 11).[25] Luther's collaboration with Lucas Cranach in 1521 provides visual evidence to encourage such an interpretation. While Luther's commentary on the Donation of Constantine led to the publication of his own edition of Valla's *De falso credita* in 1537, he had previously contributed to the publication of the pamphlet

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[23] See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 2; Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. Stanley Goodman, Vol. 2, 2nd English edition (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 79-84.

[24] John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000)

[25] Attributing "this promotion" of the *Donation of Constantine* to the Clementine period, Andrè Chastel has suggested that it was dictated by current developments, most notably Luther's response to Lorenzo Valla's *De falso credita* (see Andrè Chastel, *The Sack of Rome*, trans. by Beth Archer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 50-67); Rolf Quednau. *Die Sala di Costantino im Vatikanischen Palast: zur Dekoration d. beiden Medici-Päpste Leo X u. Clemens VII* (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1979), 339-446.

Passional Christi und Antichristi (1521). The pamphlet, illustrated by Lucas Cranach, was a collaboration among Luther, Cranach, Philip Melanchthon, and Johann Schwerdtfeger.[26] While the last two penned the Latin explanation, Luther was responsible for the German captions. The folio juxtaposing *Christ's Coronation with the Crown of Thorns* to *The Coronation of the Pope* (fig. I. 3) contains a direct reference to the Donation of Constantine. The German caption composed by Luther mockingly asserts that the corruption of the popes with the temporal crown originated with the spurious Donation of Constantine. However, scholars have recently reconsidered the view that the Protestant attack on the Donation was the single trigger for the depiction of the theme in the Sala di Costantino, calling attention to the complex political situation in the years before the sack of Rome in 1527.[27] Indeed, if we are to look at the larger picture, Raphael's *Donation of Constantine* in the Stanza d'Eliodoro (ca. 1510s; fig. III. 1) may have preceded the Lutheran attack, and even Von Hutten's edition of Valla's *De falso credita*.[28] Its commission may have resulted from concerns within the Catholic Church as well. A process of reform in response to both internal and external demands characterizes the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The political context was conspicuously much more complex than a simple opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism. While the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries serve as a general framework, the dissertation emphasizes particular moments of crisis and of positive affirmation of the Donation.

[26] See David Whitford, "The Papal Antichrist."
[27] Chastel's hypothesis has been considered unfounded by Massimo Firpo and Fabrizio Biferali, who have proposed that the current political situation led to the commission of the *Donation of Constantine* in the Sala di Costantino (see Massimo Firpo and Fabrizio Biferali, *"Navicula Petri": l'arte dei papi nel Cinquecento, 1527-1571* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2009), 35.
[28] The fresco decoration of the Stanza d'Eliodoro had been started during the reign of Julius II but finished during the pontificate of Leo X. Scholars date the frescoes in this hall to 1512-1514. However, the monochrome paintings are not taken into consideration. It is uncertain whether the monochrome scene that depicts the Donation was frescoed during the pontificate of Julius II or Leo X.

Political Art and Dissimulation

Various rhetorical devices have been employed in visual art and writings comissioned by or for rulers. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dissimulation was a constant feature of the political game. Famous political thinkers such as Machiavelli urged the use of dissimulation for political advantage. The very association of dissimulation with Machiavelli may suggest to the modern reader a pejorative meaning of the term, but one must understand that dissimulation, although decried and condemned, was considered a necessary virtue in the political discourse of this period. In recent scholarship, dissimulation has been discussed in terms of its definition and its social practice. With regard to its practice, dissimulation has often been studied primarily for its relevance to courtly environments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[29] At the same time, the term dissimulation was associated with the public behavior of individuals who concealed their religious confession in order to avoid persecution. Evidently, such an attitude had political significance. When exploring these aspects of dissimulation, certain scholars have attempted to define the concept of dissimulation. In his examination of religions dissimulation, or what Calvin called Nicodemism, Carlo Ginzburg started from the premise that dissimulation meant, according to Otto Bunfel's definition, to be silent about truth.[30] Rosario Villari's thoughts on dissimulation in the period are oriented

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[29] Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Douglas Biow, "From Machiavelli to Torquato Accetto: The Secretarial Art of Dissimulation," in *Educare il corpo, educare la parola nella trattatistica del Rinascimento*, ed. Giorgio Patrizi and Amedeo Quondam (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1998), 219-238; JoAnn Cavallo, "Joking Matters: Politics and Dissimulation in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, 2 (2000): 402-424.

[30] Carlo Ginzburg, *Il nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell'Europa del '500* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1970). Otto Bunfel's definition is based on sixteenth-century thought on dissimulation.

towards the political players rather than towards a definition of the term. He excavates the latter from key discourses he explores, such as Torquato Accetto's *Della dissimulazione onesta*.[31] With regard to the societal practice of dissimulation, parallel to the study of religions dissimulation, Villari is interested in the comportment of the oppressed in relation to the oppressors, but from the perspective of political structures. Through a more holistic approach, Jean-Pierre Cavaillé has pondered dissimulation in partnership with simulation and has considered a broad social context that encompasses different aspects previously covered in the scholarly literature (such as the courtly, the religious, and the oppressed).[32] Contradicting the interdependent relationship Cavaillé proposes between simulation and dissimulation, Jon Snyder discerns dissimulation in particular attitudes of the elites but not as a phenomenon that pervaded the whole of any given society.

In this dissertation, dissimulation is explored in connection not with those who opposed a powerful regime or an institution but with the Church, and more specifically with its head, the pontiff. In this case dissimulation may be considered as related to the courtly context. However, I argue that the dissemination of the message of the Donation of Constantine, in texts and images extended well beyond the limits of the papal court to social strata including not only elites but also common people. Another premise of this

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[31] Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione. La lotta politica nel Seicento* (Roma-Bari: Gius. Laterza&Figli, 1987).

[32] Jean Pierre Cavaillé, "De la construction des apparences au culte de la transparence. Simulation et dissimulation entre le XVIe et le XVIIIe siècle." *Littératures Classiques* 34 (1998): 73-102; Jean Pierre Cavaillé, "Simulatio/dissimulatio: notes sur feinte et occultation, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle," in *Il vocabolario delle Republique des letters. Terminologia filosofica e storica della filosofia: problemi di metodo*, ed. Marta Fattori (Florence: Olschki, 1997), 115-131; Jean Pierre Cavaillé, "Théorie et practique de la dissimulation dans le *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*," in *Mondes, formes et société selon Giordano Bruno*, eds. Tristan Dagron and Héléne Védrine (Paris: Vrin, 2003), 47-63.

study is that dissimulation need not necessarily operate in relation to simulation. Dissimulation can have its own life valorized by its capacity to act without any explicit statement about the action itself. When looking at the attitudes of the papacy toward the exploitation of a forgery, the Donation, one can see that the practice of dissimulation reflects a discrepancy between the official and unofficial stance toward the Donation. As an appreciated political strategy, dissimulation appealed to a powerful institution invested in self-promoting political art. One might say that dissimulation was inherent in the political art of the early modern popes.

In a recent study of the complex relationship between power and images in early modern Europe, the term *iconocrazia* has been proposed. Giuseppe Cascione, Franca Maria Papa, and Donato Mansueto have coordinated a series of studies that would challenge the assumption that the relationship between rulers and subjects cannot function properly without the former's explicit visual representation.[33] This approach aims to depart from Ernst Kantorowicz' classic study of the principles of representation in the Middle Ages by focusing on the status of the representation.[34] According to these authors, the potency of the term *iconocrazia* lies in its semantic acknowledgment of the modern political structure of the state. However, from an analytical point of view, the iconocratic method has so far produced studies that point to the usage of images as a confirmation of power.

There is a pronounced tendency in art historical scholarship to think of political

[33] Giuseppe Cascione and Donato Mansueto. *Immagini e potere nel Rinascimento europeo: atti del convegno internazionale di studi tenutosi presso il Dipartimento per lo studio delle società mediterranee (Bari, 9 ottobre 2008)* (Milan: Ennerre, 2009).
[34] Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies; A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

art as the expression of an existing political theory, as an active agent in terms of exploitation but passive in terms of any contribution to the theory itself. In opposition to this tendency, I contend that the Constantinian imagery produced in this period was employed in order to articulate nuanced arguments in the debate about the Donation of Constantine. Thus, the visual art not only illustrated the act of donation but also enriched the political debate through a series of specialized claims as to what the Donation meant.

Constantinian imagery in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

The various circumstances of the production of Constantinian imagery in Rome in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries require a careful consideration. After the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican (1524-1525) no representation of Constantine was made until ca. 1580. The sack of Rome and the Council of Trent had deeply preoccupied the papacy and obliged it to reflect upon the representation of crucial controversial historical events. Without any doubt, the Donation of Constantine was the most crucial. The apparent avoidance of Constantinian imagery in this period highlights the fact that the Donation of Constantine was regarded as problematic. However, an indirect but unmistakable allusion to the Constantinian legacy was made with Paul III's decision to move the *Cabalus Constantinus* to the Campidoglio. In 1536, Paul III Farnese ordered that the ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, previously believed to portray Constantine, be relocated from the *Campus Lateranensis*, the locus of papal power from Constantine's time, to the Capitoline Hill, the locus of the Roman republican administration. Although recognized by that time by humanists as the statue of Marcus Aurelius and announced as such in the inscription on the pedestal, the tradition of the statue as the *Cabalus*

Constantinus was so deeply ingrained that an overlap of meaning could easily be exploited.[35] Dissimulation was practiced in presenting the statue as Marcus Aurelius while exploiting the memory of it as the *Cabalus Constantini*. The possibility of a dual meaning is buttressed by the fact that Paul III ordered four full-size statues of Constantine to be brought to the Capitoline Hill at the same time.[36] By donating an equestrian statue that traditionally alluded to Constantine and implanting it at the core of republican Roman symbolism, the pope reminded Roman citizens of the import of the Donation of Constantine, and therefore of the subjection of the Roman people to the papacy.[37] A few decades later, in the early 1560s, Pius IV commissioned a series of donation scenes for the Sala Regia in the Vatican depicting European potentates in the act of donating domains to the papacy (figs. III. 21, 24, 25). Although the series did not include the Donation of Constantine, thematic and compositional similarities suggest a referential relationship to the donation scene in the Sala di Costantino. Only in circa 1580 was another Constantinian cycle unveiled in Rome, in the newly designed Galleria delle Carte Geografiche (fig. III. 4). While the cycle in the Galleria had been commissioned toward the end of the 1570s, earlier in the same decade, significant changes affected, as we will

[35] In the 1510's, humanists believed that the statue of Constantine portrayed Marcus Aurelius or one of the other Antonines (see Phyllis Pray Bober, Ruth Rubinstein, and Susan Woodford, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London, England: H. Miller, 1986), 206-8). Doubts about the identification of the rider as Constantine had existed even in the Middle Ages. See Maria Accame Lanzilotta, "La memoria di Costantino nelle descrizioni di Roma medioevali e umanistiche," in *Costantino il Grande: dall'antichità all'umanesimo*, ed. Giorgio Bonamente and Franca Fusco, vol.1 (Macerata: E.G.L.E., 1992), 7-16.

[36] The four statues were transported to the Capitoline Hill between 1536 and 1544. At present, one of these statues is located in the narthex of the Lateran Basilica, whereas two of them are very close to the place were Paul III brought them, on the balustrade of the Capitoline Hill. The fourth one is lost. For the four statues, see Carlo Pietrangeli, *San Giovanni in Laterano* (Florence: Nardini, 1990), 52.

[37] I also think that Paul III's project of bringing the Constantine statues to the Capitoline Hill may have been motivated by Charles V's visit to Rome. Pope Clement VII had previously employed Constantinian imagery at the coronation of Charles V, on which occasion the pontiff had commissioned ephemeral paintings to reproduce the scenes in the Sala di Costantino.

see in Chapter II, certain established methods of popularizing the Donation by means of print culture. Therefore, the eighth decade prepared the ground for the boom of Constantinian imagery in papal commissions that would follow. For this reason, the 1570s play a crucial role in the analysis of Constantinian imagery in this dissertation.

The 1570s-1580s did not represent the only period of intense production of Constantinian imagery in Post-Tridentine Rome. Indeed, the cycle in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche was the first to be painted in Rome after several decades, but it was merely the first in a series of Constantinian cycles to be commissioned in subsequent decades. Following the tumultuous debate on the Donation of Constantine in the 1570s came what one may call the "Baronius moment." Like Valla's *De falso credita*, Baronius' *Annales* have received substantial attention. While Baronius' name appears throughout the dissertation, he is not the main protagonist. Apart from the copious modern scholarship, my own work with the text of the *Annales* and with that of the considerably less-studied *Martyrologio* led me to new hypotheses. The echo of the Baronius moment was heard long after the historian's death in 1607 and became embedded in the official stance of the Church with regard to the Donation. Subsequently, during the pontificates of Urban VIII (1623-1644) and Alexander VII (1655-1667), Baronius' opinion on the Donation was respected, but new alternatives as to how the claims of the Donation could be preserved were offered. The dissertation examines these moments of the visual career of the Donation of Constantine along with other relevant Constantinian imagery produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Constantinian imagery has been the subject of studies dedicated exclusively or tangentially to particular papal commissions. For the most part, systematic examinations

of particular Constantinian images have provided iconographic interpretations. Rolf Quednau's monograph on the Sala di Costantino has reconstructed the decoration of the hall during the papacies of Leo X and Clement VII and also offered extensive archival evidence on the Sala beyond the time frame of his study.[38] Sigfrid Epp, who has dealt with a broader spectrum of Constantinian cycles in "Counter-Reformation Rome," has adopted a similar iconographic perspective.[39] Epp's study invites one to think about Constantinian cycles in a Counter-Reformation context, but offers few overarching conclusions about this visual material. Jack Freiberg was correct when he remarked a few years later that the boom of Constantinian imagery in Counter-Reformation art is a little known chapter.[40] Since then Freiberg himself has explored the cycle in the Lateran Basilica in depth and looked at other contemporary Constantinian imagery.[41] Tod Marder took a similar step while analyzing the specificities of Bernini's statue of Constantine against the broader meaning of Constantinian imagery.[42] Due to the nature of their papal patronage, certain Constantinian cycles, such as the Sistine cycles, have been examined in relation to the pontificates in which they were created.[43] The Sala delle Carte Geografiche, where a Constantinian cycle takes up a small portion of the ceiling, has

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[38] Rolf Quednau, *Die Sala di Costantino*.
[39] Sigrid Epp, *Konstantinszyklen in Rom: die päpstliche Interpretation der Geschichte Konstantins des Grossen bis zur Gegenreformation*, Schriften aus dem Institut für Kunstgeschichte der Universität München, Bd. 36 (Munich: Tuduv, 1988).
[40] Jack Freiberg, "In the Sign of the Cross: The Image of Constantine in the Art of Counter-Reformation Rome," in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (Studies in the History of Art, 48, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers, 28) (Washington, D.C., 1995), 67-87.
[41] Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[42] Tod A. Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia at the Vatican Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[43] For instance, Maria Luisa Madonna, ed. *Roma di Sisto V. Le arti e la cultura* (Roma: Edizioni de Luca, 1993).

generated a series of studies that link sacred history to geography and implicitly to the question of political dominance.[44] Marc Fumaroli has focused on an oil sketch by Rubens which was supposedly designed for a tapestry set of a *Life of Constantine* (1622-1625; figs. VI. 1-20), in order to emphasize the tensions between the papacy and the French court with regard to the limits of secular power.[45] However, a comprehensive understanding of how Constantinian imagery was employed across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is still missing. Rolf Quednau has recently put together a catalogue of early modern painted and sculpted works that represent Constantine, but it is hard to infer from it what overarching questions may be relevant.[46] In this dissertation dedicated to one Constantinian episode in particular, Constantinian imagery is considered holistically and is studied thematically, not chronologically. First, I examine the various stratagems that were employed to maximize Constantine's figure, ultimately for the purpose of sustaining the legend of the Donation of Constantine. The dissertation then takes up a series of studies on the various approaches employed in the visual representation of the Donation.

The "high-end" Constantinian imagery produced in Rome in this period was commissioned overwhelmingly by the papacy. Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco has urged every generation of art historians to write a version of the history of "papal art."[47] Some

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[44] Antonio Pinelli, "Governo del tempo e dominio dello spazio: l'Italia della Contrariforma unificata sulla carta", in *La Bellezza Impura* (Roma: Laterza, 2004), 174-82; Francesca Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps: Art, Cartography and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 171-208.
[45] Marc Fumaroli, "Cross, Crown, and Tiara: the Constantine Myth Between Paris and Rome, 1590-1690," in *Piero della Francesca and His Legacy*, ed. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin (Studies in the History of Art, 48, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers, 28) (Washington, D.C., 1995), 67-87. 88-102. For my discussion of this oil sketch, see Chapter VI, n. 508.
[46] Rolf Quednau, "Costantino il Grande a Roma," in *Costantino il Grande tra Medievo ed età moderna*, eds. Giorgio Bonamente, Giorgio Cracco, and Klaus Rosen (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008), 316-319.
[47] Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco and Angela Cipriani, 1983, 5-27.

may find the continuous scholarly interest in papal art to reflect exclusively the art of the center of Catholic Christendom. The problem is defining "papal art." When writing such a history, one must take into consideration not only celebrated artists but also many others whose identities have been subsumed under the names of the pontifical administrations for whom they worked, such as the "Sistine painters." Does "papal art" denote a style, a conceptual subordination of artists to pontiffs, or a concern expressed through the art produced at the papal court in Rome? While the present study does not attribute particular artistic styles to particular pontiffs, it does consider the relationship between pontiffs and artists as a collaborative dual agency. Like any political regime, a pontificate has its own distinctive features but is also concerned with previous ones with respect to the promotion of its origins, in this case the Constantinian epoch.

The relevance of Constantinian imagery in the politico-religious context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries emerges also from the cultural production of the Jubilee years. The commission of the Constantinian cycle for the transept of the Lateran Basilica for the Jubilee of 1600 and the renovation of the Lateran Triclinium for the Jubilee of 1625 are easily recognized as Jubilee enterprises. Interpretations of other projects may be enriched if examined within the contexts of proximate Jubilees. For instance, the completion of the Constantinian cycle in the Sala di Costantino by Clement VII, a cycle begun by his predecessor Leo X, may be classified as a project for the Jubilee of 1525. One of the innovations of this dissertation in scholarship on Constantine is to look at print culture, and the Jubilee context is relevant. Large quantities of printed material containing clear references to the Emperor Constantine and his exceptional Christian deeds were diffused during each Jubilee year. Scholarship on the art of the

Jubilees is still in its incipient phases and tends to focus on identifying the common denominator that would underpin the art of the Jubilees.[48] While this dissertation does not engage with the Jubilees and their art holistically, it does investigate the recurrence of Constantinian imagery during the Jubilees. The great significance of Constantinian imagery in the period in general made Constantine's figure effective for exploitation in a Jubilee context.

Constantinian imagery was no doubt commissioned and produced with viewers in mind, and I consider that the complete effect of these works emerged equally from their display by the papacy and from their reception by the viewers. Strategies of staging the presentation of both mobile and immobile Constantinian imagery are scrutinized in the chapters that follow. Consequently, this dissertation gives heed to architectural configurations within spaces, such as sight-lines, and routes through palaces, as well as spaces within the city of Rome that were substantive factors in shaping how the messages of these works of art were interpreted. One architectural element in particular often facilitated the scenic exhibition of monumental Constantinian cycles—the staircase. The Scalone Pontificale in the Lateran Palace, the Scala Regia in the Vatican Palace, and the Scalone in the Palazzo Barberini are examples. Scholars have explained the predilection for impressive staircases in the period as a means of expressing social status.[49] To this

[48] For the question see Sergio Rossi and Johanna Vuolasto. *The Art of the Jubilees in Papal Rome, 1500-1750: Exhibition at the Amos Anderson Art Museum* (Helsinki: F.G. Lönnberg, 2000). The curators of this exhibition have incorporated not only papal art but also the art of the guilds and confraternities.

[49] André Chastel and Jean Guillaume eds., *L'Escalier dans l'architecture de la Renaissance: actes du colloque tenu à Tours du 22 au 26 mai 1979* (Paris: Picard, 1985); Dominique Staner-Berton, *L'escalier dans les grandes demeures du XV° au début du XIX° siècle sa lecture à travers les traités d'archirtecture : Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention du grade de licence en archeologie et histoire de l'art*, Dissertation, Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut supérieur d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art, 1985.

sort of interpretation the present study adds an exposition of how particular staircases focalized imagery situated beyond their physical spaces.

This dissertation examines the figure of Constantine found in early modern interpretations of his life and actions. Art historical studies of Constantinian cycles from this period overwhelmingly define Constantine in relation to the biography composed by Constantine's contemporary, Eusebius, to the legend of St. Sylvester as found in the *Acta Sylvestri*, and only rarely to modern scholarship on the emperor. When art historians deal with the Donation of Constantine, Valla and Baronius are the period sources generally used. Besides the references for Constantine and his Donation mentioned above, this dissertation has drawn substantially on manuscript and printed primary sources composed in the early modern period, many of which have not been exploited hitherto. Some of my findings may be unexpected. For example, a series of textual and visual data substantiate my argument, demonstrated in the second chapter, that the appellatives of "blessed" and "saint" were attributed to Constantine in this period. Numerous other sources, of various genres, demonstrate my argument that the historical fact of Constantine's transfer of the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople was perceived by many in the early modern period as concrete proof of Constantine's act of donation. Evidence for these and other novel claims will be introduced in the chapters outlined below.

Summary of the Chapters

The second chapter starts with a sustained look at the textual and visual interpretations of Constantinian deeds in this period and shows that the Constantinian story existed in a multitude of versions rather than a canonical one. Such interpretations

originated either in a historical-ecclesiastical context or simply out of literary interest in clarifying and augmenting the existent corpus of historical and legendary Constantinian sources. In this respect, the Church's stake was to establish the truth of the crucial events of the Constantinian story. Integrating a series of primary sources hitherto neglected, if not entirely at least neglected in connection with Constantinian studies, this chapter has a twofold argument. On the one hand, it demonstrates that the positive reception of Constantine's deeds in favor of the Church encouraged his inclusion among the ranks of saints despite the fact that he was never canonized. On the other hand, it argues that a shift occurred in the way Constantine and his act of donation were presented to the faithful starting with the preparations of the pilgrimage guides to Rome for the Jubilee of 1575 during the pontificate of Gregory XIII: a shift from clear statements about the Donation of Constantine to statements about Constantine's founding and endowments of particular churches. The chapter proposes to look at visual definitions of the Donation prior to this shift in the aftermath of the Council of Trent. However, the propagation of these definitions beyond the last quarter of the sixteenth century is questioned. The examination of relevant images shows that constitutive elements of the Donation could be transplanted into other Constantinian episodes in order to create supplementary arguments for the Donation. In a number of instances, episodes from the life of Constantine served as "proxies" for the Donation when the Donation itself was deliberately avoided. Other episodes became "host episodes" for the constitutive elements of the Donation, either in the presence or in the absence of a representation of the Donation.

The reemergence of Constantinian cycles in papal commissions is studied in

Chapter III. Dedicated to the undertakings of the reformist pontiff Gregory XIII, the chapter explores the problematic situation at the papal court regarding the status of the Donation after the Council of Trent. The chapter demonstrates that, through the adoption of the political tool of dissimulation, Gregory XIII succeeded in navigating the controversial issue until a positive juridical decision with regard to the Donation was taken by the Curia. It argues that the legal confirmation of the Donation in 1582 motivated Gregory XIII to commission from Tommaso Laureti a fresco for the vault of Sala di Costantino (1582; fig. III. 12). The chapter shows that the fresco proposes a new visual definition for the Donation by means of an explicit itemization of the articles mentioned in the supposed document (what is here called the *object of donation*) and complements not only visually but also politically the Medici agenda for that hall. The need for a new and explicit visual representation of the Donation is contextualized within the discourse on sacred art that emerged in the Tridentine and Post-Tridentine period and which was dominated by similar concerns with vividness and explicitness. Once again, primary sources, especially manuscript sources, play a decisive role in revealing the intricate politics that enmeshed the story of Constantine and his donation at the court of Gregory XIII.

Despite its authorization by the Church, the Donation of Constantine continued to inhabit a middle ground between acceptance and rejection within the Curia. Consequently, the visual explanation of the Donation proposed by Laureti's fresco did not become canonical. Chapter IV demonstrates that alternative visual explanations were advanced in the following two decades and with the same intent: to clarify what the *object of donation* meant. These two decades encompassed four papacies but only two of

them lasted long enough to have opportunities to intervene in the visual theme of the Donation: those of Sixtus V (1585-1590) and Clement VIII (1592-1605). The pontificate of Sixtus V came right after that of Gregory XIII, and the contention is that Sixtus V maximized his predecessor's reforms of canon law and appropriated the Sala di Costantino by inserting his own politico-religious ideals within the design scheme of the existing decoration (1585-1586; figs. IV. 5-12). With that in mind, the chapter argues that Sixtus V vouched for a new visual explanation of the *object of donation* by means of the two Constantinian cycles he commissioned for the Lateran complex (and executed in 1589), an explanation which he hoped to make canonical (figs. IV. 27-37). However, the Constantinian cycle in the nave of the Lateran Basilica commissioned by Clement VIII for the Jubilee of 1600 brought new ideas about the *object of donation* by means of the scene of Constantine's *Donation to the Lateran* frescoed circa 1600 by Giovanni Baglione (figs. IV. 44-54). Against the commonly accepted interpretation of this episode, that it simply shows Constantine's endowment of the Lateran basilica, this chapter provides evidence of the debate on the Donation at the court of Clement VIII. It contends that the ambiguous status of the Donation did not exclude its validity and that the particular conditions of the donation to the Lateran did not negate the Donation of Constantine.

Chapter V demonstrates that while the Church did not recognize the Donation as a forgery, its official defense of the authenticity of the document waned gradually. However, the message of the Donation continued to be central to papal politics. When it became difficult to resort directly to the Donation, then, I argue, sustainers of the Donation thought of stratagems by which to activate the political connotations of the

Donation without referring to it specifically. While the second chapter proposes that other Constantinian episodes could allude to or substitute for the Donation as "host episodes" or "proxies," Chapter V reveals that a method of confirming the validity of the Donation was found in the incorporation of Constantinian imagery within a series of undisputed historical donations. I refer to such a series as a "genealogy of donations," and consider that its employment denotes the reliance of the papacy on the donation phenomenon. Moreover, the chapter shows that the Donation of Constantine represented the origin of a genealogy of donations. The authentic post-Constantine donations lent an air of truth to the Constantinian imagery inserted in a genealogy. The chapter deals with two series of donations, one depicted in the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum during the papacy of Paul V Borghese (1610s; figs. V. 2-27) and a second extended over the Scala and Sala Regia in the Vatican. In the first case, a representation of the Donation of Constantine itself is depicted (fig. V. 25). Its inclusion, as it will be demonstrated, reflects not only the difficult pan-European political context during the pontificate of Paul V but also the progression of the debate on the Donation at the papal court. With regard to the second series, the chapter argues that the decision of Alexander VII to install Bernini's equestrian statue of *Constantine* (1654-1670; figs. V. 31-33) at its present location was dictated by an intention to incorporate it within a genealogy of donations. Although the *Constantine* statue does not contain the overt meaning of the Donation, its absorption within a genealogy of donations made it, in effect, a proxy for the Donation.

The last chapter of this dissertation, Chapter VI, unearths a crucial aspect of the arguments for and against the Donation of Constantine. Scholarship on this debate has focused primarily on the positions of the main protagonists and very little on how these

positions were argued. By adducing a substantial corpus of archival and printed primary sources, the chapter demonstrates that the historical event of Constantine's transfer of the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople was exploited by both supporters and opponents of the Donation cause in order to prove their theories. Moreover, it shows that this event represented for the Church a confirmation that Constantine entrusted Rome, and by extension, the West, to the papacy in Rome. While the discussion of textual sources concerning Constantine's transfer of his capital to Constantinople, the *translatio imperii ad Orientem,* encompasses a long period, the visual material under scrutiny is confined to the pontificate of Urban VIII Barberini. The chapter argues that the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* was invoked as a proxy for the Donation of Constantine in two major undertakings carried out by the cardinal-nephew Francesco Barberini: the 1625 reconstruction of the medieval mosaic of the Lateran Triclinium (figs. VI. 27-29) and the Constantinian tapestry set designed by Pietro da Cortona in 1628-1637 (figs. VI. 21-26) to complete a tapestry set previously designed by Rubens in 1622-1625 (figs. VI. 1-20) and received by the cardinal as a diplomatic gift from Louis XIII in Paris in 1625. The completed tapestry set, depicting a *Life of Constantine,* reveals how Constantinian imagery became dialectically entangled in the discourse on papal prerogatives between the French court and the papacy, and more specifically how the event of the Foundation of Constantinople afforded divergent interpretations, depending on the political theory to be epitomized by this event. The circumstances of the gift exchange in Paris are productively explored with the aid of modern gift theory in order to draw out the implications of Constantinian imagery in the period. Establishing a pertinent proxy for the Donation could be a more challenging intellectual task than defending the authenticity

of the document.

In conclusion, proxy episodes and visual quotations of constitutive elements of the Donation theme are the forms by which the Donation continued to be disseminated after direct representations of the theme became politically inappropriate. The figure of Constantine could not but provoke memories of the Donation and of the heated debate on the papacy's claim to temporal authority. Thus, it is appropriate to commence our journey by reviving the image of Constantine as it was perceived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter II

Constructing Constantine and His Donation to the Church in Early Modern Rome

The religious tumults of the sixteenth century prompted the papacy to a re-evaluation of its past in order to establish certain unequivocal truths for its most crucial constitutions. Taking into account the intricate foundational relationship between the first Christian Emperor Constantine and the papacy, a valorization of Constantine's deeds was critical to such a re-evaluation. This chapter addresses a subject that has been neglected in the scholarship to date. It focuses on how the figure of Constantine was utilized in the Catholic milieu in order to make the visual rhetoric associated with the Donation of Constantine more potent. The structure of the chapter consists of two sections, the first focusing on the figure of Constantine and the second on his act of donation. The presentation of Constantine's actions in the first part of the chapter prepares the ground for understanding the emperor's ultimate act in favor of the Church, the alleged donation.

In the first section of the chapter, two important issues are treated. These are Constantine's deeds and the emperor's contradictory policy toward the visual arts. Here the discussion builds on existing historiographical and art historical perspectives regarding the significance of the Constantinian era in the foundation of the Roman Church. The chapter then explores new territory in demonstrating that in the early modern period Constantine was on occasion regarded as "blessed" or a "saint." The

second part of the chapter addressing the Donation of Constantine also makes several significant contributions. It introduces for the first time the genre of guidebooks to Rome (the *Mirabilia Urbis*) into the debate on the Donation of Constantine. Furthermore, it establishes the textual and visual significance of this genre for the broad dissemination of the message contained in the Donation. The chapter then addresses how the Donation was presented in visual imagery of the Donation prior to the 1580s, and the term "proxy" is proposed to characterize alternative subjects that could take the place of the controversial Donation in visual arts. This concept of "proxy" donation scenes will be further explored in other chapters of the dissertation which discuss Constantinian imagery produced after 1580.

PART I: The Early Modern Reception of Constantine

A Brief Biography of Emperor Constantine

Before turning to the early modern sources, it useful to look at earlier histories of Constantine in order to appreciate how later sources presented the biographical details of the emperor's life. The biographical account written by the emperor's contemporary Eusebius of Caesarea, the *Vita Constantini*, was the most extensive source of information on Constantine. However, despite the title of the work, Eusebius' account did not describe the emperor's life in painstaking detail but rather offered a panegyric emphasizing his benevolent acts toward Christians. In addition to Eusebius' *Vita*, other Early-Christian and medieval ecclesiastical historians included references to Constantine, many of whom

derived from Eusebius.[50]

As this chapter demonstrates, there were numerous versions of the life of Constantine in the early-modern period, many of which already existed in the medieval period. It is almost impossible to draw a line between the "historical" and "legendary" nature of each detail of the emperor's life found in these sources that were available to early-modern readers. While a complete study of these details lies outside the scope of this dissertation, medieval and early modern sources will be compared when considering certain essential events from the life of Constantine.

In the early modern period, drawing from Eusebius and other earlier sources, it was believed that Constantine was born in *Britannia* and was the son of the Roman officer, and future emperor, Constantius and of Helena.[51] Constantine distinguished himself in military campaigns and gradually advanced in the military hierarchy. In 312, he challenged Maxentius and conquered Rome. In this way, Constantine and Licinius became the two rulers of the Roman Empire. However, a decade later, the relationship between the two deteriorated, which led to wars against Licinius. Constantine succeeded in eliminating Licinius and thus proclaimed himself the sole emperor. On a personal level, it was known that the emperor had had a few wives. One of them was primarily mentioned as the mother of the emperor's son Crispus. Another wife, Fausta, produced the future heirs to the throne and also owned property at the Lateran that would later figure in the donation made by Constantine to the papacy. Constantine ordered the almost

[50] Such as the ecclesiastical histories authored by Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrus, and St. Jerome. In addition, various legends had been composed throughout the Middle Ages, but in this introductory paragraph we are interested in the historical Constantine. For the medieval legends see below, p. 49-50.
[51] Today historians consider that Constantine was born in Nis, Serbia in c. 272.

simultaneous execution of Crispus and Fausta in 326 for uncertain reasons.[52] Toward the end of the third decade of the fourth century, Constantine decided to build a New Rome (Constantinople) over the city of Byzantia and subsequently, in 330, to transfer the imperial capital there. Constantine died in the East and was entombed in the Church of Holy Apostles in Constantinople. During his reign, Constantine had embraced Christianity. He received the baptism and showed great interest in supporting Christianity throughout his empire. His mother became a zealous Christian, though it is unclear from the sources whether this occurred before or after Constantine's conversion. The dates of Constantine's own conversion and baptism were controversial in the early modern period, as will be evident within the chapters of the dissertation.

Constantine as the Christian Emperor and Defender of the Church

The papacy's historical relationship with powerful secular rulers can be characterized as a long adventure of collaboration and conflict. Giuseppe Scavizzi has pointed out that Constantine, Gregory the Great, and Charlemagne became emblematic figures for the Church during its Tridentine and Post-Tridentine reform period.[53] However, there was also a clear effort to portray a certain category of historical figures—the imperial or royal servants of the Church—as sacrosanct heroes of the Church. There were political motivations, and these involved not only past historical figures such as Constantine, Charlemagne, and Matilda of Canossa but also contemporary heroes such as

[52] Modern scholars tend to emphasize two reasons: either an amorous relationship between Crispus and Fausta or Constantine's fear of Crispus' ambition to take over the reins of the empire.
[53] The author has noted that Constantine became "la chiave di volta della nuova storiografia cattolica" in the late Cinquecento. See Giuseppe Scavizzi, "Storia ecclesiastica e arte nel secondo Cinquecento," *Storia dell'arte* XXIX, 1984, 29-46.

Christina of Sweden.[54] A few of these celebrated rulers, such as Matilda of Canossa and Christina of Sweden, even had funerary monuments in St. Peter's.[55] Commemorative statues were erected for those rulers whose human remains were either not traceable or were located far from Rome such as those in honor of Constantine, Charlemagne, and Henry IV (fig. V. 28, V. 31, V. 35). Furthermore, images of the first Christian kings of nations that were officially Catholic were celebrated in visual arts, with the episodes from the life of the French King Clovis in the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome being a notable example.[56] The papacy counted on demonstrating the full support of Christian kings on all levels. [57]

Amongst the exceptional Christian rulers, Constantine was distinguished by his unique complex status as both the first Christian emperor and the founder of major Christian basilicas, of certain Christian traditions (like the *possesso*), and of the temporal possessions of the papacy. Constantine received the title *Ecclesiae Defensor* (fig. I. 20). From the inception of Constantinian historiography, beginning with the fourth-century accounts of Eusebius, the emperor's personal discovery of Christianity was believed to have occurred early in his life through the Vision of the Cross, just prior to the battle

[54] Queen Christina of Sweden abdicated her throne in order to convert from Protestantism to Catholicism in 1655. The event was heavily advertized as a victory of Catholicism by Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667).
[55] For Matilda, Urban VIII (1623-1644) wrote a poem as for a saint and transported her tomb to St. Peter's (in whose vicinity that of Christine of Sweden was later installed).
[56] No doubt, the Constantinian example gave an impetus to the French, who portrayed their first Christian king, Clovis, in the tradition of the emperor Constantine. Clovis embraced Christianity through the baptism administered by St. Remy and commenced a fervent campaign against the pagan idols. In this manner episodes from his life are depicted in the Roman Church of San Luigi dei Francesi. The richly ornate chapel contains frescoes and an altarpiece datable between 1548 and 1562. The chapel is dedicated to St. Remy, but in fact the stories refer principally to Clovis and the miraculous battle that led to his conversion. The parallel with Constantine is striking; yet, Clovis did not experience a vision before the battle like Constantine did. The altarpiece captures Clovis' determination to introduce Christianity and to eliminate the pagan idols while St. Remy baptizes the French.
[57] Also notable is the introduction of a copious passage about the oration addressed to founders of churches in the revised *Pontificale Romanum* of Clement VIII (1596).

against Maxentius in 312 A.D. Nevertheless, as will soon become clear, according to the views of numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers on the life of Constantine, the emperor's Christian soul was primarily revealed after his baptism at the hands of Pope Sylvester I, an event that the Roman Church dated to 324 A.D. After his baptism, Constantine initiated a massive campaign of constructing and endowing churches, principally in Rome, Constantinople, and the Holy Land. According to various sources, in Rome, five out of the seven major pilgrimage churches were traditionally considered to be of Constantinian foundation.[58]

As noted earlier, it was also acknowledged that at some point, in 330 A.D., the emperor transferred the capital of the empire from Rome to Constantinople. The foundation of Constantinople and the Donation of Constantine were perceived by papal historians to be interrelated events. The foundation, however, was universally accepted in the early modern period as a verifiable historical event and was pointedly used by many to give credence to the controversial Donation. The absence of the emperor from Rome, the traditional capital of the empire, along with Constantine's overt profession of Christianity, lent plausibility to the transfer of power from Constantine to the Roman Christian leader at the time, Pope Sylvester I. The fabricated document of the Donation of Constantine justified the terrestrial power of the papacy, and proved to be Constantine's greatest act in behalf of the papacy.

The interest in emperor Constantine and his act of donation in the early modern period was manifested not only by clergymen but also by secular writers and poets. This

[58] The major five churches founded by Constantine in Rome are: St. Peter's, San Giovanni in Laterano, San Paolo fuori le Mura, San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Santa Croce in Gerusaleme. The foundation of the last one was attributed either to Constantine or to his son Constantius. There is also a series of smaller churches believed to have been founded by Constantine.

wide reception of Constantine and the sophisticated nature of the engagement can be seen, for instance, in the poem dedicated to Constantine in the *Galeria* (1620), composed by the celebrated poet Giambattista Marino. The poem is written in first person. It begins with Constantine's foundation of the Greek empire in Byzantium and approves the splendid gifts which Constantine gave to "his spouse," with the poet defining the relationship between the Church and the emperor in biblical terms. However, Marino observed the gifts did not have to include the gold diadem, an item which according to the text of the Donation was essential for Constantine's act of donation.[59] Marino's verses construct the character of the emperor as narrator, as if to correspond with Eusebius' source for his *Vita Constantini*, Constantine himself, or with the text of the donation which, as a supposed imperial document issued by the emperor, was composed in first person. Marino employed Constantine's voice to confer credibility upon the gifts he offered to his bride, the Church. A few years later, in 1629, Ottavio Tronsarelli published the erudite epic poem *Il Costantino* intended to glorify Constantine's deeds in war, following the model of Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneas*. [60] The author also touched upon the Donation as the ultimate goal of Constantine's martial deeds. [61] In this instance, we see again how Constantine's role as both a defender of Christianity and as a donor of fundamental gifts to the Roman Church is given emphasis.

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[59] "Io, che di fé congiunto in nodo santo/Alla Chiesa di Dio sposo mi diedi,/Dotai la sposa di sè ricchi arredi,/Che n'ha d'oro il diadema, e d'ostro il manto." Giambattista Marino, *Galeria*, Ritratti Huomini, I, 39, 13-16.

[60] Ottavio Tronsarelli, *Il Costantino* (Roma: Francesco Corbelletti, 1629).

[61] "Vedeva ancora i giusti Successori/De l'Apostol primier da Flavio in dono/Ottener Roma, e con sublimi honori/Ivi fermar di lor grandezze il trono,/E de l'Italia i popoli, e i tesori/Farsi soggetti; e n'trionfante suono,/Scossi de gli empi Numi i simulacra,/Agli Augusti imperare i Pastor Sacri." Ottavio Tronsarelli, 561.

In the early modern period, in addition to the most familiar deeds of the emperor, certain other traditions came to be associated with Constantine as a founder of the Roman Church. Cesare Baronius and Federico Borromeo, for example, both emphasized that an elaborate standard incorporating a cross known as the *labarum* originated in Constantine's Vision of the Cross, an event that marked his first personal contact with Christianity.[62] The *labarum* was especially significant for those involved in the military defense of Catholicism. Relics associated with the Constantinian period appealed to believers. Indeed, relics attributed to the Constantinian period which survived into the early modern period were highly revered. The Lateran Basilica, the church built by Constantine in honor of the Savior, owned the icon with the presumed true likeness of St. Peter and St. Paul that had been shown by Pope Sylvester to Constantine after his vision of the two saints. Fascinatingly, sixteenth-century guides to the pilgrimage churches advertise the existence in the same church of the crown, which according to the Donation document, had been given by Constantine to Pope Sylvester along with Western imperial territories and other gifts.[63] Without any doubt, this crown was the one that Constantine

[62] Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici* (Romae: ex typographia Romana, 1592), III, 74, Federico Borromeo, *Sacred Painting,* ed. Kenneth Sprague Rothwell and Pamela M. Jones, trans. Kenneth Sprague Rothwell (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), II,3,9. Both authors relied on Eusebius, XXXI. Sozomen, Hist. Eccl. I.8. For a description of the *labarum*, it is best to use Eusebius' words: "Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid with gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On the top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this the symbol of the Saviour's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P being intersected by X in its centre and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period. From the cross-bar of the spear was suspended a cloth, a royal piece, covered with a profuse embroidery of most brilliant precious stones; and which, being also richly interlaced with gold, presented an indescribable degree of beauty to the beholder. This banner was of a square form, and the upright staff, whose lower section was of great length bore a golden half-length portrait of the pious emperor and his children on its upper part, beneath the trophy of the cross, and immediately above the embroidered banner." Eusebius. *Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart George Hall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), XXXI, 21.

[63] The passage in the Latin edition reads: "videlicet Tira cu qua coronatus fuit sanctus Silvester Papa per Constantini imperatorem."(*Mirabilia Urbis*, 1513).

allegedly presented to the pontiff along with his donation. The crown, considered a relic, was conserved at the altar of St. Magdalene in the Lateran Basilica (fig. IV. 24b, no.14 on the plan), where it was venerated and provided material evidence in support of the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine. [64] In addition, the papal rite of investiture (the *possesso*) that concluded at the Lateran Basilica was deemed, as we will soon see, to have originated in the Constantinian period.

Relics in Rome with more questionable links to Constantine also reveal much about the early modern reception of the late antique emperor. The complex seventeenth-century controversy regarding the origin of the relic of the Cathedra Petri conserved in St. Peter's, for example, sheds light, I suggest, on the extent to which Constantine came to be associated with the material remnants of early Christianity. It also illuminates the new level of scrutiny to which these sacred objects and their related legends could be subjected in this period. The popular idea that the Cathedra Petri belonged to the period of the apostle himself was opposed by Fioravante Martinelli who ascribed the Cathedra to the Constantinian period and supported his point of view by means of the Donation of Constantine.[65] The date of Martinelli's manuscript writing on the Cathedra, 1665, is contemporary to Alexander VII's efforts to create an impressive bronze reliquary for the Cathedra with the help of his favorite artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Though Martinelli's

[64] Unfortunately, no visual record of the old altar of St. Magdalene has surfaced to indicate how this crown was enshrined. The altar was dismantled during the renovation of the nave, commissioned by Innocent X from Francesco Borromini for the Jubilee of 1650.

[65] "Tengo per indubitato che Costantino donasse la medessima [Cathedra] à S. Silvestro, poi che volendolo sublimare alla maggior maestà possible con haverlo regalato d'ogni suo ornament.to e portamieto,"; "La forma della sedia.. denota esser sedia gestatoria, e credo in vigour del privilegio di Costantino usata la prima volta di S. Silvestro, e poi da suoi sucessori, legendossi nella donatione di q.llo..." Fioravante Martinelli, *Della Catedra, chiamata di S. Pietro, le quale si conserva nella Basilica Vat.na. Disorso (1665),* Vat.Lat. 8429, BAV.

attempt proved unsuccessful in the end, it highlights the fact that such an attribution could seem pertinent at that time. Martinelli's view is consistent with the image of Constantine that emerges from early modern sources as the consummate defender of Christianity and the founder of prominent early Christian sites and traditions.

Constantine as Destroyer of the Arts versus Builder of Christian Art

In the early modern period, Constantine was celebrated for his role in the spread of Christianity throughout the entire Roman Empire. Constantine's efforts were acknowledged to involve a gradual effacement of the pagan pantheon. The emperor's attempts to eliminate idolatry had been noted by his fourth-century biographer Eusebius, and as such stimulated subsequent authors who elaborated on the topic.[66] In an anonymous Greek work translated into Latin by Johann Reuchlin in 1513 and available in Italian in 1542, Constantine was portrayed as having the eradication of idolatry constantly on his mind.[67] Some authors limited their comments to the destruction of specific ancient monuments. For instance, the theologian Giovanni Andrea Gilio referred to the Temple of Venus that had been razed by Constantine in order to build the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusaleme.[68] In Baronius, one reads that Constantine destroyed a temple dedicated to Venus in Jerusalem that had been built upon the tomb of Christ.[69] In addition, authors such as Giovanni Severano (*Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, 1630) and Ottavio Tronsarelli (*Il Costantino*, 1629) emphasized Constantine's refusal to worship the pagan

[66] Eusebius, III, 7.
[67] *Constantinvs Magnvs Romanorum Imperator*. Ioanne Reuchlin Phorcensi interprete (Tubingae : Apud Thomam Anshelmum Badensem: 1513), 15.
[68] Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Le persecutioni della chiesa* (Vinegia: appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari, 1573), 204.
[69] Baronius, *Annales*, 348 E.

deities after his triumph over Maxentius and his relocation of the *Campidoglio*, the epicenter of the religious life of pagan Rome, at the Vatican.[70] The latter act signified a change both in religion and in the locus of power in Rome.

Early modern images representing the destruction of idols in the Constantinian era complement the written accounts. This was a topical theme in Roman visual art at a time when the papacy and Catholic hegemony in Europe were seriously challenged. Prominent examples include the frescoed scenes of the *Destruction of Idols* (fig. IV. 3) and the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* (fig. IV. 1a) in the Sala di Costantino, Pietro da Cortona's design for *Constantine Destroying the Idols* for a *Life of Constantine* in tapestries commissioned by the cardinal-nephew Francesco Barberini (fig. VI. 25), and in the *Decisions of the Council of Nicaea* (fig. I. 1) where the subject is presented in the secondary scene in this fresco in a Constantinian cycle in the Lateran Baptistery. The first two of these scenes, where Constantine himself is absent, show a more general interest in the issue of idolatry, whereas the other two emphasize Constantine's participation in the destruction of ancient statues representing pagan deities and in replacing them with Christian symbols. The implication in all these works of art is that the change in religion from the Roman pantheon to Christianity involved acts of violence against visual art from the classical period. Framed within the discourse celebrating the triumph of Christianity, these acts of violence appeared legitimate, regardless of the profound social and cultural implications. This was not, however, the only way in which the destruction of pre-Chrisitan art by Constantine was perceived in the period.

[70] Giovanni Severano, *Memorie Sacre delle Sette Chiese di Roma* (Roma: per Giovanni Mascardi, 1630), 34; Ottavio Tronsarelli, *Il Costantino*, 1629, 64, 578.

The heathen world of classical antiquity could not be separated from the ancient art that was so praised by the artists in the early modern period. As a consequence, the destruction of ancient art authorized by Constantine could be seen in a negative light. Beginning in the Quattrocento, artists held Constantine responsible for the decline of the arts resulting from his spread of Christianity to the empire. Practitioners like Lorenzo Ghiberti (*I comentarii*) and later Francisco de Hollanda (*Da Pintura Antiga*) and Giorgio Vasari (*Le Vite*) considered the Constantinian period as the epoch in which art declined with the propagation of Christianity within the Roman Empire.[71] A different opinion was advanced by the painter Raphael. In his letter to Pope Leo X, written with the help of Baldassare Castiglione, Raphael addressed the issue of the preservation of Roman antiquities. Raphael took as his example the Arch of Constantine, a monument that had been used as a source for the Constantinian scenes in the Sala di Costantino. However, Raphael did not identify the Constantinian period as responsible for the decay of the arts but rather conceived of a gradual decay that commenced before Constantine and continued after him.[72] Despite Raphael's alternative, the idea that the cause of the decay of the arts originated in the Constantinian period became widely diffused, most probably due to Vasari's influential *Vite*.

This position was not, however, embraced by the Church. As noted above, officials of the Church instead called attention to the role played by Constantine as a

[71] The negative commentaries were informed by the discourse on the quality of art. Lorenzo Ghiberti, *I comentarii*, ed. by Lorenzo Bartoli (Florence: Giunti, 1998), 83. For Francisco de Hollanda see the Italian edition Francisco d'Olanda, *I trattati d'arte*, ed. Grazia Modroni (Livorno: Sillabe, 2003), 27; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de piu eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori* (Firenze, 1550), 119-123. For Ghiberti see also F. Haskell, *History and Its Images*, 113-5; Charles Dempsey, "Response: *Historia* and Anachronism", 420-421.

[72] Raphael, "Lettera a Leone X," in *Scritti rinascimentali di architettura*, ed. Arnaldo Bruschi and Coraldo Maltese (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1978), 459-484.

builder of Christian art. Baronius, in particular, dedicated himself to the question, but as Giuseppe Scavizzi has shown, similar efforts were made by Post-Tridentine authors prior to Baronius.[73] These authors emphasized that it was the Church itself that had preserved painting. In his *Annales*, Baronius stressed that Constantine had been a great commissioner of sacred art. [74] Moreover, Baronius addressed the criticism of Constantine's by claiming that it was based on a misconception and that the decay of the arts in the Early-Christian period was instead caused by the general persecution of sculptors and artisans who were forced to continue to produce pagan idols against their will.[75] His discussion features the impressive Arch of Constantine, which in contrast to Vasari's negative assessment of the monument, is used to exemplify the artistic achievements of the Constantinian era. In the end, as we have seen in Chapter I, the Arch of Constantine could be categorized as a Christian work of art.

In the seventeenth century, artistic discourses persisted in taking issue with Constantine's role in the development of the arts. The physician and art critic Giulio Mancini, echoing Vasari, took the position that the Constantinian epoch marked the beginning of the period of the decay of the arts, especially of painting.[76] Mancini's

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[73] G. Scavizzi refers especially in Onofrio Panvinio's work (see Scavizzi, "Storia ecclesiastica"); for Baronius, see Ingo Herklotz, "Historia sacra und mittelalterliche Kunst während der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts in Rom," in *Baronio e l'arte: atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Sora, 10-13 ottobre 1984*, ed. Romeo De Maio (Sora: Centro di studi sorani "Vincenzo Patriarca," 1985), 21-74.

[74] Only Justinian and Charlemagne could be compared to him; see Mirela Scala, "Aspetti teorici della committenza negli *Annales Ecclesiastici* di Cesare Baronio," in *Baronio e l'arte*, ed. Romeo de Maio, (Sora: Centro di studi sorani "Vincenzo Patriarca," 1985), 261-287. Scavizzi considers that the Constantinian period offered Baronius justification for the promotion of images. See Scavizzi, "Storia ecclesiastica," 29-31.

[75] Baronius, *Annales*, III, 80. See also Philip J. Jacks, "Baronius and the Antiquities of Rome," in *Baronio e l'arte*, ed. Romeo de Maio, 1985, 75-96.

[76] "fin a Constantino, dove mutandosi la Religione con la declinazione dell'Imperio decline in Roma et in Italia questa professione"; "e cosi quat' età della pittura declinante puo dirsi principiata da Constantino." Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni Sulla Pittura* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1956), 256.

position proves how difficult it was for humanists to reconcile the figure of Constantine the first Christian emperor with Constantine the destroyer of ancient culture. In his *Vite* (1642), the artist Giovanni Baglione, who also adhered to Vasari's scenario, introduced the idea that the arts in Rome finally revived in the late thirteenth century thanks to a pontiff of Roman origins, Boniface VIII (1294-1303). Baglione pointed to Boniface's employment of Giotto, the hero in the Renaissance narrative about the "rebirth of art," in order to underline the Church's constructive interest in the arts.[77] In this way, Baglione's thesis on the revival of painting in Rome through the agency of the papacy in the late Duecento meant to emphasize the sustained concern of the Church with the arts from that time to the present day. Baglione's argument attempted to redress the account that tarnished both the reputation of Constantine and that of the Church.

Constantine in Legends

While the Church attempted to create an official history of Constantine with the aid of meticulous historians like Cesare Baronius, various legends (*legendae*) about the emperor that were in contradiction with this newly authorized account continued to circulate and accrue. The old legends which early modern authors had at their disposal were primarily the *Acta Sylvestri*, the *Legend of the Holy Cross* and Jacobus de Voragine's *Life of Sylvester*. [78] There were also ecclesiastical histories that elaborated on the life and deeds of the emperor from the fourth-century account of Eusebius to the

[77] Giovanni Baglione, *Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti: dal Pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572 in fino a' tempi di Papa Urbano Ottavo nel 1642*, ed. Jacob Hess (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1995), 12.

[78] The *Acta* (also known as *Vita* or *Gesta*) *Sylvestri*. The historical records on Sylvester are very limited. On the *Acta Sylvestri*, see E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 461; Vian, *La donazione*, 53-60.

fifteenth-century version of the history of the pontiffs penned by Bartolomeo Platina during the reign of Sixtus IV (1471-1484).[79] In addition, there was the Donation of Constantine itself but none of the early legends made any allusion to the Donation. Nevertheless, the *Acta Sylvestri* mentioned the privilege allegedly promulgated by Constantine that established the preeminence of the bishop of Rome over all other bishops.[80] According to Giuseppe Scavizzi, the flaw of Catholic historiography lay in its stubborn clinging to medieval legends; this practice led not only to the persistence of these legends but also to the way in which history was perceived.[81] In our particular case, the figure of Constantine, legends contributed greatly to constructing a certain image of the emperor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Some details of the Constantinian story were contested by Protestants, some by Catholics, and some by representatives of both confessions. Protestants disputed the Legend of the Cross, while Baronius argued against them.[82] Platina doubted the story about Constantine's leprosy.[83] Following in his footsteps, Giovanni Andrea Gilio, a Dominican deeply interested in the fate of sacred art, called the story "*favolosa.*"[84] The Donation of Constantine, too, was deliberately disregarded by many, regardless of religious identity. Certain historical facts mentioned in its text, however, were considered to be more plausible than others. Even Valla considered the donation of the Lateran

[79] Platina, *Lives of the Popes* (1475).
[80] See Vian, *La donazione*, 58-59. Accretions to the *Acta* occurred subsequently to its first mentioning in the fifth century. In the version found in the *Liber Pontificales*, there are references to particular donations, of parcels of land inclusively, to certain churches.
[81] See Scavizzi, "Storia ecclesiastica," 29-46.
[82] See Baronius, Annales, III.
[83] Platina, 35.2.
[84] Gilio, *Le persecutioni*, 200.

Palace to the papacy possible and not a threat to the authority of secular rulers.[85] Platina, whose *Lives of the Popes* was published a few decades after Valla's *Declamatio*, pointed out that Constantine donated the Lateran Palace to Sylvester's predecessor, Pope Miltiades. In the next two centuries, authors oscillated between dating the donation of the palace to the pontificate of either Miltiades or Sylvester I. A solution to the deadlock was put forward in a guide to Rome composed by Ottavio Panciroli (1610). In it, one reads that Constantine donated the Lateran Palace to Pope Miltiades and the Lateran Basilica to Pope Sylvester. Similarly, the foundation of the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusaleme was frequently attributed either to Constantine or to his son Constantius. At the same time that these questions about the accuracy of the historical record attesting to Constantinian deeds were being raised, there were new accounts written that introduced fictional events. The versions of Constantine's life authored by Rannuccio Pico (*Costantino Magno Imperatore e Guglielmo Duca d'Aquitania aggiunti ai prencipi santi*, 1623) and Andrea da Barberino (*I Reali di Francia*, 1665) are telling examples of this current. Pico augmented Constantine's life with invented glorious military events during his youth, while da Barberino elaborated on the *Acta Sylvestri* in such a way as to increase the drama of the emperor's conversion.[86] While the old legends often came under critical scrutiny, the more recent additions did not receive such treatment, most likely because they were considered to pertain to a greater extent to the genre of fiction than to that of

[85] Valla, *On the Donation*, 52.
[86] Pico staged a fight between Constantine and a lion. For more on this story, see Chapter VI. Ranuccio Pico, *Costantino Magno Imperatore e Guglielmp Duca d'Aquitania aggiunti ai prencipi santi* (Parma: Apresso Anteo Viotti, 1623). Andrea da Barberino, *I Reali di Francia, ne' quali si contiene la generatione de gli imperatori, rè, duchi, prencipi, baroni, & paladini di Francia. Con le imprese grandi, & battaglie da loro fatte, cominciando da Costantino imperatore, fino ad Orlando conte d'Anglante* (Venetia : appresso Lorenzo Prodotto, 1665).

sacred history.

Certain historical facts posed serious problems to those invested in portraying Constantine as an exemplary Christian. Constantine's cruelty towards members of his own family—the killing of his son Crispus and his wife Fausta—was deliberately ignored in the period.[87] Equally problematic for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors was the difficulty of creating a coherent account of Constantine's recognition of Christianity in the aftermath of the Vision of the Cross in 312. This difficulty was due to contradictory evidence of Constantine's persecutions of Christians prior to his baptism, as stated in the *Acta Sylvestri*. Evidently, the *Acta Sylvestri* version of events aimed to emphasize that the Vision alone was insufficient for the conversion of the emperor. The sacrament of the baptism, performed by an ecclesiastical authority, marked Constantine's full conversion. Cautious omissions and additions to the biography of Constantine were made in order to craft the desired version of the emperor's life.

The mixed historical and legendary traditions out of which the early modern accounts of Constantine were forged encouraged major European political powers to exploit specific episodes and themes from Constantine's life. Particularly appealing to secular rulers were Constantine's promotion of the supremacy of the emperor over ecclesiastical authority and his associations with certain geographical places. This first position regarding imperial supremacy was associated with Constantine's ruling in Byzantium, and is known as the Caesaro-papism theory. [88] An example of how Constantine's connections both to a geographical place and to a politcal theory could be

[87] For a recent evaluation of the fourth-century sources see David Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[88] For more details on this topic, see Chapter VI.

exploited by a European monarchy can be seen in the case of England. Constantine's birth in Britain entitled the English to claim him as an English leader. In the Elizabethan period, the Protestant court entourage invoked the political theory of imperial supremacy initiated by Constantine in Byzantium in order to support English claims. This move was justified with reference to Constantine's origins in the kingdom.[89] Needless to say, such political perspectives must have bothered the Curia, but other aspects of the historical and legendary Constantinian traditions could be used to the advantage of promoting Catholicism. Attention should be called to the fact that contemporaneously, in Rome, a catalogue of English Catholic saints was prepared for the inauguration of the English College in Rome by Gregory XIII (1572-1585).[90] Although not a saint, Constantine appears in this catalogue owing to his birth on English soil. The illustration accompanying the entry on Constantine in the *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea Sive Sactor, Martyrum, qui Pro Christo Catholicoeq fidei Veritate asserenda antique recentiriq* (fig. II. 2) conflates, as one can see upon a close inspection, two episodes from the Constantinian cycle in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche designed for the same pope Gregory XIII (fig. III. 4 b, d). In the print, the *Vision of the Cross* (letter A) takes place in the foreground, whereas the *Baptism* of the emperor (letter B) appears in the middle ground. The latter scene carried with it the message of submission to papal authority and here it deliberately takes a second position to the primary miraculous event in

[89] See Thomas Dandelet, "Creating a Protestant Constantine: Martin Bucer's *De Regno Chtisti* and the Foundations of English Imperial Political Theology," in *Politics and Reformations: Communities, Polities, Nations, and Empires: Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr*. ed. Andrew Colin Gow (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 539-550.

[90] *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea Sive Sactor, Martyrum, qui Pro Christo Catholicoeq fidei Veritate asserenda antique recentiriq. Persecutionum tempore mortem in Anglia subierunt*. Cum Privilegio Gregorio XIII P. M/, 1582.

Constantine's life, the Vision of the Cross. To the English royal appropriation of Constantine for political purposes, the Church responded, as we can see, by affirming Constantine as Catholic and, moreover, by including him in a collection of saints, though he was not literally one of them. The Constantinian story appealed in Catholic France as well, but since Chapter VI deals extensively with this issue, this discussion will be postponed until then.

In the early modern period Constantinian legends grew as they conveniently assisted both Catholics and their opponents. Indeed, the appropriation of the Constantinian story by different political parties may have inspired Alessandro Donato to characterize Constantine in the introduction to his poem in honor of the first Christian emperor (*Constantinus Romae Liberator*, 1640) as a common exemplum for all the parties involved in the inter-religious Thirty Year Wars (1618-1648).[91]

Constantine as "Beatified" and a "Saint"

While the Eastern Christian tradition already counted Constantine as a saint, the Catholic Church did not attribute to Constantine the same status.[92] Constantine's visions of the Cross and of SS. Peter and Paul were the exceptional experiences of divine intervention in the emperor's life. Both episodes were often featured in Constantinian cycles in the early modern period, particularly the Vision of the Cross (fig. III. 8; IV. 30,

[91] Alessandro Donato, *Constantinus Romae Liberator. Poema Heroicum* (Romae*:* Ex Typographia Manelfi Manelfij. 1640), 3.

[92] There is no certain date when Constantine, along with his mother Helena, came to be venerated as a saint in the East. For instance, early ninth-century representations of the two indicate their saintly status.

33).[93] The miraculous Vision of the Cross, leading to Constantine's victory over Maxentius, conferred upon Constantine a special heroic saintly status and helped the Church in buttressing the eradication of heresy. The subject was frequently represented in visual art. Book illustrations attached to poems dedicated to the victorious Constantine explored the theme of the Vision of the Cross in a new way, while reaffirming Constantine's reliance upon divine intervention. In the engraving prefacing Ottavio Tronsanelli's *Il Costantino* (1629), a double battle takes place between antagonistic forces under the sign of the cross. Below, in the earthly realm, the emperor, astride his horse on the Milvian Bridge, defeats his enemy. Angels, positioned in the sky above, drive away a host of devils (fig. II. 6). These conventional features found in many other contemporary visual narratives are absent in the illustration to Alessandro Donato's poem about Constantine (1646) (fig. II. 7). Instead, the emperor is depicted rather as a David or Samson, accompanied by Minerva, with one leg resting on the head of his enemy. This celebration of Constantine by means of allegory based on historical facts endows the image with divine and saintly associations.

Constantine's legend was also dependent upon those of St. Sylvester and of his mother Helena (both of whom were considered saints by the early modern period), as well as that of the Holy Cross. [94] In visual cycles describing these legends, the location and the intended message dictated which details of each narrative were given emphasis. However, in papal commissions Constantine was always presented in close relation to

[93] To my knowledge there is just one exception: the cycle in the transept of the Lateran Basilica commissioned by Clement VIII. For my explanation of this absence, see Chapter IV, in the section devoted to Clement VIII.

[94] There are no clear dates when the two became saints. With regard to St. Helena, there are ninth-century records that attest that she was regarded as a saint already in that time.

Pope Sylvester. The *Martirologio Romano*, the Roman catalogue of saints, registers Constantine's support of the Church through the three legends mentioned above.[95] The entries devoted to St. Helena and St. Sylvester are dominated by Constantine and his deeds, the former as a preamble to Constantine's exemplary comportment, as if St. Helena's most notable action was to give birth to Constantine rather than her celebrated recovery of the Holy Cross. On the other hand, the *Legend of the Holy Cross* focused primarily on St. Helena's finding of the True Cross in Jerusalem and thus did not presuppose the presence of Constantine in its visual renditions of the subject. In Rome, in fact, neither the frescoes by Antoniazzo Romano in the apse of the Church of Santa Croce (late Quattrocento) nor the cycle in the Oratorio della Santa Croce (1580s) introduced Constantine into the narrative. In any case, Constantine's presentation through the respective legends of St. Sylvester and St. Helena tended to grant him a "reflected" sainthood.

Constantine's deeds in favor of the Church, his visionary experience, and his direct association with the legends of St. Sylvester and St. Helena, create the perception of the emperor as a saintly figure. Ultimately, however, as Giovanni Severano stressed in his discussion of Constantine's portrait on the wall of the restored Lateran Triclinium in 1625 (fig. VI. 30), Constantine was "non santo, ma pieno di virtù."[96] Certain Roman

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[95] "3 di Maggio,… della Luna A Gerusaleme è l'Invenzione della Sacrosanta Croce del Signore, sotto di Costantino imperatore"; "18 di Agosto,… della Luna …. A Roma nella via Lavicana santa Elena madre di Costantino Magno piisimo imperatore; il quale fu il primo a dar essempio agli altri principi nel difendere e ampliare la Chiesa"; "31 di Dicembre,…. Della Luna A Roma il natale di San Silvestro papa, il quale batezzò Costantino Magno imperatore, e confermò il Concilio Niceo, e dopo molte alte opera santissime si riposò in pace"; See *Martirologio Romano datto in luce per ordine di Gregorio XIII e riconosciuto coll' autorità di Urbano VIII e Clemente X aumentato e corretto da Benedetto XIV; nuova edizione italiana accuramente corretta, migliorata e tradotta sull'ultima edizione Latina di Propaganda Fide per un Padre della Comp. di Gesù* (Torino: Tipografia e Libreria Salesiana, 1886).
[96] Severano, *Le Sette Chiese*, 124.

places bound by legend to Constantine's presence received special attention. Besides the churches he founded, other sites in Rome emerged as worthy of pilgrims' reverence. The guides to Rome mention the "room of Constantine" later transformed into the Chapel of St. John the Baptist in the Lateran Baptistery (fig. II. 3) and the emperor's visit to the ancient Church of SS. Silvestro e Martino ai Monti on the occasion of his participation in a council convened there in 324 by Pope Sylvester I.[97] The fresco depicting the Council, executed in this church in 1640 by Galeazzo Leoncino (fig. II. 4), commemorates the event and the close collaboration between the pontiff and the emperor, as well as Constantine's subordination to Pope Sylvester I in ecclesiastical matters. The highlighting of Constantinian *loci* throughout the city of Rome would have given pilgrims a perception of the emperor similar to that associated with venerated religious figures.

The kind of veneration shown toward emperor Constantine in the early modern period could have led to tensions if tested against Post-Tridentine rules on sanctification. The Congregation of the Rites, founded by Pope Sixtus V in 1588 to deal with beatifications and canonizations, restricted the employment of the terms *beato* and *santo* only to the period after the Church's promulgation of a given person's status as a *beato* or *santo*. [98] Despite heavy censorship by the Church, a lax usage of such titles persisted. In a

[97] There are many references to Constantine's room. For instance, see Giovanni Baglione, *Le nove chiese di Roma* (1639), ed. Liliana Barroero (Rome: Archivio Guido Izzi, 1990), 116.
There was a vivid debate as to whether Pope Sylvester had been present at the first Council of the Church presided over by Constantine in Nicaea. Regardless of the answer, the Church affirmed that a council had been held in Rome in the same year by Sylvester and Constantine, a council which approved the decisions of the Council of Nicaea. The motivations of claiming a Nicaea Council in Rome, in which both Sylvester and Constantine participate, are evidently politically driven.

[98] Even if intentions to sanctify Constantine would have concretized, it was impossible to fulfill one of the rules imposed by the Congregation of the Rites: the necessity to assess the financial administration of the potential saint's tomb (for this rule see M. Gotor, 49). Constantine had been entombed in the Church of Holy Apostles in Constantinople, a church razed in 1461 by Mehmet II in order to build the Fatih Mosque

most interesting case for our purposes, a booklet prepared by the anonymous custodian of the *Sancta Sanctorum* in Rome and published by the Vatican in 1648, *Sommario delle reliqvie che si conservano, et indulgenze che sono in questo Sancta Sanctorum,* refers to Constantine as "Beato."[99] Describing the fresco cycle in the Sancta Sanctorum, the author identified the figure at the extreme right of the wall displaying the receptacle for relics as St. Sylvester, whereas the one at the opposite end of the wall as *Beato Constantino* (fig. II. 5). [100] The presence of St. Sylvester made possible the inclusion of Constantine amongst the array of saints in the chapel. The use of "beato" in this text may also have resulted from the belief that, according to some legends, St. Sylvester nominated Constantine a canon in this very place.[101] Thus, this depiction of Constantine and Sylvester in the Sancta Sanctorum could be understood as commemorating a Constaninian locus. The images of Constantine and St. Sylvester were depicted on the wall that was symbolically the most significant in the chapel. This was the wall with the shrine containing numerous famous relics and with the inscription about the unique status of the chapel. The two figures would have bracketed the selective group of the *Deisis* (the group of Christ, the Virgin, and John the Baptist). Although it is not absolutely clear which pope commissioned the series of saints to which the so-called "Beato Constantine" belongs, it is agreed that Giovanni Nanni executed the fresco series in the late sixteenth-

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over the site. By contrast, St. Helena's sarcophagus was in the possession of the Roman Church, in the Lateran Basilica (now in the Vatican Museum).

[99] *Sommario delle reliqvie che si conservano, et indulgenze che sono in questo Sancta Sanctorum (* Roma: Stamparia della Rev. Cam. Apost., 1648).

[100] "Nelle due finestre piccole di ferro sopra l'Altare, e primo dentro à quella finestra di sopra …. All'Immagine di S. Silvestro Papa vi sono mole Ossa di Santi Innocenti, e un Gran Cassa con Vasi pieni di Reliquie de Santi Martiri siche à pena si pou aprire. Nella finestra contigua all'Immagine del Beato Constantino vi sono moltissime Relique de Santi Martiri…" *Sommario,* 4.

[101] For instance, see *Le cose meravigliose dell'alma della cittá di Roma,* 1595.

century.[102] The figure identified as Constantine, like all other in the series, had a halo denoting his saintly condition. The author of the description was presumably cognizant of Constantine's status, but he evidently deemed Constantine's depiction as a blessed or saint within the realm of possibility. A more general perception of Constantine's closeness to sainthood had to exist if a statement about Constantine as a "Beato" was published under the aegis of the Vatican. The *Sommario* must have been a popular and well diffused text as it is referenced by other authors. Later in the century, for example, the *De Scala Sancta ante Sancta Sanctorum in Laterano* (1672) composed by Giuseppe Maria Soresini—excerpts of which were quickly issued in Italian (*Compendio Storico Cronologico,* 1674)—contained a description of the Sancta Sanctorum similar to that encountered in the *Sommario*.[103] As a result, the *Beato Constantino* took his place amongst the saints in the Sancta Sanctorum.[104] A few eighteenth-century authors signaled this error, but for many Catholic readers in the second half of the seventeenth century, Constantine was a certified member of the "blessed."[105]

Labeling Constantine "blessed" would have been less audacious than attributing sanctity to him. As mentioned above, the Eastern Christian Church already celebrated

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[102] Our main source for this attribution is Baglione's *Le vite*. The frescoes seem to have been executed either late in the pontificate of Sixtus V, when other major works at the complex of the Scala Santa were under way, or during the pontificate of Clement VIII. The modern interpretations of the believed Sylvester and Constantine concur in identifying them with Isaiah and David. This interpretation is based on an eighteenth-century description of the frescoes. See Mario Cempanari, *Sancta Sanctorum Lateranense: il Santuario della Scala santa delle origini ai nostri giorni*. (Rome: Tipografia Città nuova, 2003), 49.

[103] Giuseppe Maria Soresini, *De Scala Sancta ante Sancta Sanctorum in Laterano* (Romae: Ex typographia Varesij, 1672); *Compendio storico cronologico tratto dall'Opere Latine del Sig. Abbate Soresini* (selection and translation by Giuseppe Pazzaglia) (Roma, 1674).

[104] "Nelle due finestre piccolo di ferro sopre l'Altare e primo dentro a quella finestra vicino all'Immagine di San Silvestro Papa…. Nell'altra finestra contigua all'Immagine del Beato Constantino vi sono moltissime Reliquie de Santi Martiri." *Compendio storico cronologico,* 33.

[105] For eighteenth-century texts see Giovanni Marangoni, *Istoria dell'antichissimo oratorio, o capella di San Lorenzo Patriarchio Lateranense comunemente appellato Sancta Sanctorum e della celebre immagine del SS. Salvatore detta Acheropita che ivi conservasi ; colle notizie del culto e varj riti praticati anticamente verso la medesima* (Roma: nella stamperia di San Michele, 1747).

Constantine as a saint. In the West, those who wished to advance particular ideas and interests could use the title as a polemical tool. The German Protestant Martin Bucer, for example, referred to the first Christian emperor as “Saint Constantine” in a tract composed at the English court intended to bolster the monarchical claims against the supremacy of the papacy in worldly matters.[106] In the Catholic world, the fact that Constantine was considered a saint by the Eastern Christian Church justified Ranuccio Pico’s reference to Constantine as a saint.[107] If we are to believe Beneditto Mellini, a visual representation of Constantine as a saint existed in Rome since the first decades of the fifteenth century. In his description of Rome composed around the middle of the seventeenth century, Mellini mentions a “S. Constantinus” painted in the manner of Baldassare Peruzzi in a chapel to the left of the portico of the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusaleme.[108] The presence in Rome of this representation of Constantine as a saint may make the identification of Constantine as a "blessed" in the *Sommario* of the Sancta Sanctorum seem less unorthodox. The use of the adjective “*sanctus*” applied to Constantine in the Latin editions of the *Mirabilia Urbis* in the first part of the sixteenth century is equally revealing.[109] Even more significant is the adjective *sanctus* that

[106] The book was published only posthumously in 1551. See Dandelet, “Creating a Protestant Constantine,” 541.
[107] Pico, *Costantino Magno Imperatore*, 249.
[108] Benedetto Mellini, *La "descrittione di Roma" di Benedetto Mellini nel Codice Vat. Lat. 11905*, eds. Federico Guidobaldi, Claudia Angelelli, Luana Spadano, and Giulia Tozzi, (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Crisitiana, 2010), 47. The chapel was destroyed in the eighteenth century when the church received a new portico.
[109] "Quomodo Constantinus a lepra est curatus: & a beato Silvestro baptizatus. Quomodo sanctus Constantinus ecclesiam Romanam dotavit; beato Silvestro ominbusq; suis successoribus Romanis pontificibus, tota Italiam: omnes provincias occidentals: regiones: loca civitates & insulas que circa Italiam sunt pio affectu dedid.de indulegentiis omniu ecclesiarium & reliquiis que Rome existent de statioibus in eisde per circulum anni & c.", *Mirabilia vrbis Rome. Indulgentie, sanctorum reliquie & stationes vrbis, ac quemadmodum ea a Romulo condita: ad hec ipsius Romuli vita, omniumque ab eo regum & cesarum, vsque ad Constantinum magnum imp. Qui Romanam ecclesiam pontifice Siluestro dotauit* (Rome impressa, per

appears in this same guide book to Rome in the phrase that articulates the donation of Constantine. Evidently, *sanctus* could also be translated as venerable, since in the 1542 Italian edition of the text *sanctus* was transformed into *prefato*.[110] Notwithstanding, many readers of the pilgrimage book to Rome would have understood the word *sanctus* as pertaining to sainthood. The clarification in the 1542 Italian edition shows that times had changed in the years before the opening of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), but, as we shall see in the next section, the statements about the Donation of Constantine inserted into the beginning of both the Italian and Latin editions of the *Mirabilia* genre remained part of the text. A delightful state of confusion regarding Constantine's status permitted the elevation of the first Christian emperor to the highest levels of the saintly hierarchy, and a bold affirmation of his act of donation to the Church.

Part II: The Donation of Constantine

The Donation of Constantine in the Mirabilia Urbis

Of utmost importance to the dissemination of information about Constantine and his Donation is the genre of the *Mirabilia Urbis*, guides to the city of Rome. Hitherto, this rich material has been ignored in modern scholarship on both the Donation and on Constantinian imagery in general, most probably because it lies outside the scope of the learned debates in the early modern period. The *Mirabilia Urbis* had medieval roots but

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Antonium Bladum, ca. 1513-1521).

[110] "Et come il prefato Costantino grato del ricevuto beneficio al beato Silvestro, & a tutti li suoi successori Romani Pontefici in fotta gli concesse tutta Italia , & tutte le provincie Occidentali, Regioni, Luochi, Citta, & isole che sono d'intorno ad Italia.", *Le cose meravigliose della citta di Roma con le Reliquie, e con le Indulgentie de di in di, che sono in tutte le Chiese di essa tradotte di Latino in Volgare* (Vinegia, per Guilielmo da Fontaneto, 1542).

with the advent of printing new versions produced in more numerous editions could supply the demand of visitors of all sorts for a brief instructive text on the history of Rome and its churches.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, at least from the edition published during the pontificate of Leo X (1513-1521), the *Mirabilia* opened with a title page that clearly referred to the Donation of Constantine.[111] Although the idea of creating a title page with an account of the Donation may have matured only in the 1510s, the text of earlier editions, such as those of 1504 and 1508, included paragraphs on the Donation.[112] References to the Donation in the opening section of the book continued in editions published over the next several decades (fig. II. 8).[113] The first part of the *Mirabilia* text, provided a succinct history of the Roman rulers beginning with Romulus and Remus, the founders of the city, and concluding with Constantine, the founder of Rome as the city of the papacy. The chronology of Roman leaders deliberately ended with Constantine because his reign marked the transition in the city from emperors to the pontiffs as rulers of Rome. As noted above, the summary on the title page of the *Mirabilia* incorporated this narrative since at least the edition of Leo X. Nevertheless, the section on Constantine concluded with the text of the so-called Edict of Constantine. This Edict is nothing more that a collage of passages from the Donation of Constantine and the *Acta Sylvestri*. In addition, the reader was alerted to the paragraph on Constantine through a special visual

[111] For the text of the summary of the history of Rome provided on the title page, see above, n. 109.
[112] The 1504 ad 1508 editions have almost the same beginning inscriptions. The 1504 edition bears the coats-of-arms of Alexander VI Borgia. However, this edition has an extra opening engraving illustrating: *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter*. Thus, the two theories on the source of papal power are at the same time presented to the viewer.
[113] In the example shown here from the 1550 Italian edition, the history of Rome from Romulus and Remus to Constantine was reduced form several pages to two insignificant paragraphs. However, the Constantinian story preserved its substantial portion within the economy of the text.

artifice on the printed page used specifically to create a sharp contrast between Constantine and previous Roman emperors. The artifice consisted of beginning the paragraph that contained the Constantinian story with either the capital letter "c" that appears in Constantine's name or with a "tab" or with both devices.

The second part of the *Mirabilia*, often separated from the first by the caption *Indulgentia Ecclessiae*, is devoted to the Roman churches. While the opening summary on the Donation and the so-called Edict of Constantine were conspicuous textual elements, no mention of Constantine's involvement in building and endowing particular Roman churches appeared in the section on the churches. In effect, the statements on the Donation of Constantine in the first part of the book stood for all Constantinian particular deeds. This format of the *Mirabilia*, both in its Latin and Italian versions, continued through the 1570s.

The new practice of pilgrimage to the "seven churches of Rome" initiated in the 1570s, especially by the Oratorian Filippo Neri, led to the publication of pilgrimage books on the churches and of maps of Rome depicted as a pilgrimage city (fig. IV. 13b).[114] The genre of the religious guide to the city of Rome would continue to diversify in the next decades. These guides were published either anonymously or under the name of certain authors, such as those between Onofrio Panvinio's *Le Sette Chiese di Roma* (1570) and Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza's *Xieroxenia* (1694).[115]

It is crucial when considering these guides to draw attention to those produced in

[114] The section of the *Indulgentiae Ecclesiae* was the ancestor of the guides to the seven churches.
[115] Onofrio Panvinio, *Le sette chiese principali di Roma*. Tradotte da M. Marco Antonio Lanfranchi. In Roma. Per gli Eredi di Antonio Baldo, 1570; Carlo Bartolomeo Piazza, *Hieroxenia overo Sacra Pellegrinazione alle sette chiese di Roma. Con le Due d'antichissima Divozione, che anno le nove chiese* (Roma, per gli eredi del Corbelletti, 1694).

the period of the 1570s. This decade, coming only a few years after the conclusion of the Council of Trent in 1563, witnessed a heated debate about the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine within the Curia. This debate was provoked by reforms initiated by Pius IV, and continued by Pius V, and then finally promulgated by Gregory XIII. While this interesting and problematic situation will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, here it is important to point out that this debate dramatically affected the dissemination of knowledge about the Donation of Constantine by means of the new editions of the *Mirabilia* genre. It led—and this is perceptible beginning with the edition published for the Jubilee year 1575—to the omission of the title-page summary of the Donation and the Edict of Constantine. In fact, almost every reference to the Donation of Constantine was eliminated. Instead, new versions of the *Mirabilia* genre from 1575 on elaborated precisely on what had been missing in the previous editions. They point to the foundation and the endowment of specific Roman churches by Constantine. As we will see in the following chapters, this change reflected the skepticism that had grown regarding the veracity of the Donation, paving the way for a scholarly formulation of these doubts by an influential Oratorian, the historian Cesare Baronius. In the new format of the *Mirabilia* guidebook, the descriptions of the five of the seven major churches of Rome, as well as some other less prestigious churches, began with a statement about their foundation by Constantine (fig. II. 9 a-c). The same presentation was adopted in engravings of the pilgrimage churches as well as in maps of Rome that instructed the faithful (fig. II. 10 a-e).[116]

[116] The illustrations shown here complement each other so that each of the five major Constantinian basilicas are represented. In addition, the maps include all of them.

In consulting these sources attentively, it becomes evident that the reader/viewer was directed to visualize Constantine in direct connection with these specific churches. On the basis of these observations, the argument can be made that with the elimination of the references to the Donation of Constantine from the text of the *Mirabilia,* the focus shifted towards Constantine's great deeds and particular gifts offered to certain churches. This current extended to the fresco decorations as well. For example, in the fresco cycle dedicated to Constantine's life commissioned by Urban VIII Barberini for the Lateran Baptistery in the 1630s, a visual representation of the Donation of Constantine is absent. Nevertheless, there are medallions exhibiting Constantine's major ecclesiastical commissions that adorn the upper register (fig. II. 11-16).[117]

If we are to turn to the reader/viewer of the *Mirabilia* and the pilgrimage maps of Rome, we can imagine that the repeated visualization of Constantine's name and of the particular gifts that he had offered to these Roman churches would have made it difficult for him to distinguish between gifts and donation. In the end, the majority of these readers would not have had have legal training to be able to internalize such a distinction. Although effaced from the body of the text of the new versions of the *Mirabilia* genre, the Donation of Constantine was nonetheless still in evidence, owing to Constantine's broadly publicized acts in favor of the Church.

In considering the valence and the circulation of the Donation of Constantine prior to the profound reevaluation of the document in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, let us turn now to the prominent visual representations of the subject, along with

[117] I think the imitation of medals is intentional as a form of historical proof for Constantine's commissions. They also parallel contemporary coins and medals struck for the inaugurations of pontifical undertakings. Even in this cycle, Urban VIII aligns himself with Constantine by having inserted a medal celebrating the pontiff as the restorer of the baptistery.

related Constantinian imagery, in Rome prior to 1575.

Constantinian Imagery Before 1580

In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, prior to the devastating sack of Rome in 1527, pontiffs commissioned two *Donation* fresco scenes for two adjacent rooms in the Vatican Palace. Raphael rendered a *Donation* in a monochrome fresco on the arch framing the window in the Stanza d'Eliodoro in the 1510s (fig. III. 1). Raphael's pupils, Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, frescoed another interpretation of the theme for Clement VII (fig. III. 11) in the Sala di Costantino. The narrative in both frescoes focuses on the act of donation. While the limited wall surface at Raphael's disposal obliged the artist to characterize the event as a rather private gathering, an extended portion of one of the walls in the Sala di Costantino allowed Romano and Penni to represent it as an expansive public event. In both scenes, the viewer can recognize Constantine's submission to Pope Sylvester in the emperor's stance and in the actual act of donation—denoted by the tiara in the Raphael fresco and by the statue of Rome in the Romano-Penni version. In this dissertation, the pictorial elements in the *Donation* scenes that transpose the juridical concept of the Constantinian donation of regalia and territories into visual terms will be referred to as the "object of donation."

One can judge Raphael's fresco, now lost, thanks to Giovanni Pietro Bellori's efforts to preserve Raphael's exemplary paintings in the late seventeenth century. In addition to his verbal descriptions of Raphael's paintings, Bellori employed Pietro Santi

Bartoli to produce a set of engravings after Raphael's frescoes.[118] Incorporated into the decoration of the Stanza di Eliodoro, as a secondary scene painted in monochrome, Raphael's small-size fresco emphasized the doctrine of papal temporal authority. The *Donatio Constantini* showed the emperor kneeling in front of Pope Sylvester I against a clearly Roman imperial setting offering the pope the tiara as a token of his donation. As one can observe, Raphael had adopted the motif of the tiara from the medieval frescoes in the St. Sylvester Chapel in the Monastery of SS. Quattro Coronati in Rome (fig. III. 23). The tiara stood for the receipt of imperial prerogatives by the papacy.

Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano's *Donation of Constantine* (fig. II. 11) shows a great gathering within the stage-like symmetrical architectural setting of the Early-Christian Basilica of St. Peter. The recently baptized emperor Constantine kneels in front of the enthroned pope Sylvester I and before an audience formed by people of diverse social status, age, and dress. [119] Two epigraphs attached to the foreground columns supplement the visual information.[120] The compositional scheme employed by the two artists succeeds in singling out the main protagonists as well as marking the hierarchical superiority of the Pope over the Emperor. In addition, the perspectival lines and the play between shadow and light alert the viewer to the most significant part of the *storia*, the exchange between the emperor and the pope: Constantine presents the object of donation (fig. III. 22a)—represented by a statue of Rome held by both the emperor and

[118] Giovanni Pietro Bellori. *Descrizione delle imagini dipinte da Rafalle d'Urbino nelle camere del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano* (Roma: Gio. Giacomo Komarek, 1695). For Bartoli's work on the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino, see Stefania Massari, *Giulio Romano pinxit et delineavit: opere grafiche autografe di collaborazione e bottega* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi Editori, 1993), 237-247.
[119] According to the Donation of Constantine, the event of Constantine's donation took place four days after Constantine had been baptized by Pope Sylvester.
[120] The inscriptions: *Iam tandem libere profiteri licet* (on the left column), *Ecclesiae dos a Constantino tributa* (on the right column).

the pope—and, in return for his beneficent deed, receives the papal benediction. The fresco addresses the critical features fundamental to the visual representation of the Donation subject: the object of donation and its visual equivalent, the message about the struggle between pope and secular power for hierarchal preeminence, the explanatory role of an epigraph, and the essential triangular relationship for a donation, the donor, the donee, and the audience in the role of witness.

Despite the fact that both frescoes were generally believed in the early modern period to be authored by Raphael, the smaller monochrome painting had less impact and the large fresco was the more authoritative version of the theme.[121] Even Bellori, who charged Bartoli with the task of reproducing Raphael's monochrome painting, ignored the monochrome fresco in his description of the Stanza d'Eliodoro.

Besides the artistic qualities valued in the Romano-Penni fresco, another factor may have contributed to its paradigmatic status. No other Donation scene was commissioned in Rome in the period between the Romano-Penni fresco and the 1580s, a period of over five decades characterized by profound politico-religious transformations.[122] Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the previous section, knowledge of Constantine and his donation to the Church persisted in widely propagated popular texts. When new visual representations of the Donation appeared in the 1580s, the Romano-Penni fresco was the point of reference for them. Each of these new representations of the

[121] I deal with the status of monochrome painting in an article on "the Spada and the Barberini" based on a paper which I presented at the 2012 RSA Conference.

[122] During this period, Constantinian imagery appeared outside Rome in cycles dedicated to St. Sylvester. In the 1560s, a sarcophagus for the human remains of St. Sylvester preserved in Nonantola was commissioned to be used as an altar table in the Duomo. One of the scenes on the sarcophagus of St. Sylvester shows Constantine knelt in front of Pope Sylvester and handing to him a document with three seals. The three seals may indicated that the document was an edict not the Donation.

Donation proposes a different definition of the act of donation. As these works will be explored in detail in the next three chapters, we shall look here instead at depictions of other episodes in the life of Constantine designed prior to the 1580s. What will concern us in particular are the episodes that were capable of featuring certain constitutive elements of the Donation and whose visual vocabularies would remain virtually unchanged subsequently.

In this period, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, other events from the life of Constantine could be supplementarily manipulated to convey the message of the Donation. Nevertheless, at that moment, the controversy on the Donation of Constantine resulted not in an omission of its visual representation but in its incorporation in decorative cycles. Up to the third decade of the sixteenth century, two episodes in particular were closely linked to Constantine's act of donation: the *Baptism of Constantine* and *Constantine Acting as a Strator for Pope Sylvester*, or, what it will be called in this dissertation, *The Possesso of Pope Sylvester I*. According to the Donation of Constantine, the baptism of the emperor preceded his act of donation and was the reason for his munificence. The story of Constantine fulfilling the role of *officium stratoris*, holding the reins of Pope Sylvester's white horse, instead, followed the donation of the imperial prerogatives by Constantine and signaled the triumphal procession of the pontiff within the city of Rome. When the debate on the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine made the overt representation of the subject too problematic, these two episodes functioned to allude to, replace, or reinforce the meaning bound up in the Donation episode. These scenes can be characterized as "host episodes" and "proxies" that accommodated within their imagery references to the contested Donation.

The baptism of Constantine defined Pope Sylvester as a saint, representing the core of the legend of St. Sylvester and a quasi miracle *per se*. According to the legend, Constantine was afflicted with leprosy and cured instantly by the baptismal water. Although Constantine experienced a theophany on the occasion, witnessing a white light in the sky, Sylvester's performance of the sacrament linked the pontiff inextricably to the emperor and to the miraculous healing. The cure seems to have been a particularly appealing feature of the narrative for believers. Here, I would like to call attention to the fact that the *Martirologio Romano* registered the baptism of Constantine as the most extraordinary deed of St. Sylvester's life. However, the Church had another motivation for highlighting this event. Historical sources such as the first biography of the emperor composed by his contemporary Eusebius, recorded the baptism of Constantine as taking place right before the emperor's death and performed by the Bishop Eusebius in Nicomedia. Such an account undermined the version of the story of the baptism transmitted in the *Acta Sylvestri*, which featured Sylvester as the administrator of the sacrament and Rome as the location. The Church, however, never doubted the version of the baptism of the emperor as described in the *Acta Sylvestri*. On the contrary, it launched a defense of the case, and Baronius' effort to establishing this truth on the topic of the baptism is very telling.[123]

Depictions of the baptism of the emperor included, in addition to the performance of the sacrament by St. Sylvester, a series of elements that hinted at a larger Constantinian context (figs. II. 10, 18, 19; III. 4e, 10; IV. 28, 36, 50; VI. 10, 18). In some instances, the

[123] Baronius, *Annales*, 324 A-C. Giovanni Andrea Gilio who was skeptical on the leprosy of the emperor aligned himself with the Church's dogma with regard to the location of the baptism and its performance by Sylvester.

event was staged in the Constantinian baptistery, an octagonal building in the Lateran complex that Constantine had supposedly erected after his baptism (fig. II. 10; IV. 28). In other cases, the events unfolds in the proximity of a baptismal font (fig. III. 4e), under a less developed architectural setting that preserves references to the octagonal core of the Lateran Baptistery (fig. IV. 36), or within a generic space (figs. II. 18, 19). The theophany is seldom featured (fig. IV. 50). Besides the main protagonists—Pope Sylvester and Constantine—canons, the emperor's attendants, and common people are shown as participants to the event. Just as in the *Donation* scenes described above, these other figures become witnesses who can vouch for the veracity of the event.

In all depictions of the baptism of Constantine, the focus is on the bond between the pontiff and the emperor. This bond is clearly visualized through the baptismal water falling from the inclined vessel held by St. Sylvester onto Constantine's head. The emperor, wearing only a perizoma, or loincloth, kneels with his head tilted down. His attendants hold his imperial crown and red cloak, while those of St. Sylvester hold the liturgical vessels used during the ceremony of the baptism. Pope Sylvester is dressed in ceremonial garb that includes either the one-tiered or the triple-tiered tiara. Only exceptionally is the tiara replaced with the episcopal headgear (fig. IV. 50).[124] These *Baptism* scenes transmit a profound sense of the submission of the emperor in front of ecclesiastical authority. They also demonstrate how the emperor entrusted himself to the Church, represented by Pope Sylvester and the baptismal sacrament.

The baptism of the emperor by Pope Sylvester instituted the historic dependence of secular power on ecclesiastical authority. A *Baptism of Constantine* could transmit

[124] For my discussion of the *Baptism* in the Lateran transept, see Chapter IV.

such a message even in the absence of the *Donation of Constantine*. The *Baptism of Constantine* could be exploited to foster constitutive visual elements of the *Donation*, especially those which denoted the imperial prerogatives: the crown—the tiara—and the red imperial cloak. Indeed, in the *Baptism of Constantine* in the Sala di Costantino (fig. III. 10), Pope Sylvester wears a triple tiara (*triregnum*).[125] In the Sala di Costantino, where the *Donation of Constantine* is represented as well, the *Baptism* amplifies the message of the *Donation*. But in the absence of the *Donation*, the *Baptism* had the role of advancing the case of the *Donation*.

The tiara became a constant feature in representations of the Baptism of Constantine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Rome and deserves our special attention. Avanzzino Nucci's *Baptism of Constantine* (ca.1590; fig. II. 18) for the Chapel of St. Sylvester in the Church of San Silvestro al Quirinale seems to have enfolded the *Donation* into the *Baptism* as the tiara and the artificially displayed red lining of the pontiff's cloak are shown to the beholder. The tiara is is a key feature of the pictorial representation in the *Baptism* scenes commissioned by pontiffs in this period (fig. III. 10; IV. 36). [126] It also appears when the Baptism of Constantine is presented as the most important deed in St. Sylvester's life, such as in the apse of San Silvestro in Capite (fig. II. 19).

The presence of the tiara in papal imagery could be designed by artists and registered by viewers without conscious reference to historical chronology. Viewers,

[125] For a discussion of the tiara in the medieval period, but also relevant to the way the tiara was used in the early modern period, see Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Le chiavi e la tiara: immagini e simboli del papato medievale* (Rome: Viella, 1998).
[126] There is an exception, the one in the transept of the Lateran Basilica. For my discussion of this, see Chapter IV.

however, who were interested in eliminating anachronism from sacred painting could accuse such artists and their patrons of dissimulation. There is an interesting example in Michele Lonigo's discussion of the *Mass of Gregory the Great* in the Clementine Chapel in St. Peter's.[127] Lonigo was a person of great erudition and deeply involved in the life of both the Vatican Library and the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum in the 1610s. By examining the painting, Lonigo pointed out that those who decided to insert the triple tiara in a painting showing Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) had dissimulated because such a tiara had not existed in Gregory's time.[128] A similar question could be raised with regard to imagery related to Pope Sylvester I, whose papacy preceded Gregory's by almost three centuries. Indeed, the incorporation of the tiara in a portrait of St. Sylvester sufficed to supporters of the authenticity of the Donation to interpret that image in terms of the Donation itself. Similarly, the portrait of Constantine could allude to the Donation. An example can be seen in how Angelo Rocca, the custodian of the Vatican Library nominated by Sixtus V (1585-1590), interpreted pendant portraits of Constantine and St. Sylvester (fig. II. 21) that had recently been frescoed in the Salone Sistino of the Vatican Library, under the sign of the Donation.[129] As noted above, not only is the triple tiara

[127] Michele Lonigo was incarcerated in 1617 at the order of Paul V, the same pontiff who had promoted him up to the position of protonotary apostolic, on the official account that he had extracted documents from the Vatican and that he had had amorous relations with his "padrona di casa." He regained his freedom thanks to Gregory XV (1621-1623). Subsequently, he continued his studies and sought to enter the circle of Urban VIII Barberini (See *Dizionario Bibliografico degli Italiani*, 2005, vol. 65). Archival material shows that he was a prolific writer but many of his texts have remained in manuscript.

[128] "Ma che habbi posto quel Regno li sopra l'Altare , nel qual mostra habbi quel Pontefice celebrato, è errore, che forse supera tutti gl'altri, e tale che in niun modo si deve dissimulare: è cosa chiariss.a questa, che à tempi di S. Greg.o il Regno non era in uso, ne fusse la mitra." Michele Lonigo, *Ventinove lettere italiane delle quale più propiamente chaimate trattati, relazioni, di ecclesiastica erudizione in materia quasi sempre ceremoniale. Breve realtione del sito, qualità et forma antica della confessione di S. Pietro*, Barb. Lat. 2969, BAV.

[129] "Ut igitur quae dicta sunt, summatim concludamus, temporalem summo Pontifici inesse potestatem, Constantinq. Donationem veram extitisse, immo rerum temporalium potestatem tyrannice olim usurpatam, tamquam Ecclesiae propriam ab eodem Constantino redditam fuisse cum Augustino Triumpho affritmatus.

present in many images of St. Sylvester, but it is also depicted in representations of the *Baptism of Constantine*, an event that according even to its legendary sources occurred before the donation of the imperial crown by Constantine.

The potential of the *Baptism of Constantine* to absorb crucial constitutive elements of the *Donation* made it an ideal host episode by which to allude to the Donation. The tiara in the *Baptism* scene signaled the empowerment of the pontiff, but the dependence of the *Baptism* upon a religious context and its occurrence before Constantine's act of donation could overshadow the political associations of the transfer of power from the emperor to the papacy. There were other episodes in the Constantinian story that could serve effectively as proxies for the *Donation* scene.

Episodes that were more secular in meaning—and that occurred either after Constantine's act of donation or without temporal specificity—could successfully reinforce the Donation in its presence or substitute for the Donation in its absence. This dissertation will analyze various such cases of reinforcement and substitution. Here it examines an episode that, according to the Donation itself, succeeded the moment of the donation, the *Possesso of St. Sylvester I.* This episode is treated in this section of the dissertation because representations of its subject were depicted for the first time prior to 1580.

The *possesso*, in general, is a papal rite of investiture which can be documented

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Hinc in semicolumna latertia, de qua sermonem habuimus, Salvatorem nostrum, Ecclesia universalis caput rapraesentatum esse diximus: ad cuius dextram Silvester, Christi Vicarus, as laevam autem Constantinum magnus, Ecclesia & opibus atque armis defensor pro huiusmodi Donatione indicanda, seu potius innuenda, ut reor, per pictoriam artem rapraesentati conspiciuntur. Reliquum est autem, ut ad cetera transeamus declaranda." Angelo Rocca, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana a Sixto V in splendid. locum translata, commentario illustrata* (Romae : Ex Typographia Apostolica Vaticana, 1591),192-3.

from the ninth century on. [130] A *possesso* followed the coronation of a new pontiff and consisted in the procession throughout the city of Rome from the Vatican to the Lateran, where the new pontiff was celebrated as the bishop of Rome. The principal stations of the procession, besides the departure and the destination points, were: the Capitoline Hill, the Forum, the Arch of Constantine and the Coliseum. Interestingly, the ninth-century sources that attest to the existence of the *possesso* postdate by only a few decades the fabrication of the document of the Donation, which raises the possibility that the *possesso* resulted from an application of the Donation to the papal ceremonial.

While the earliest records of a *possesso* date from the ninth century, seventeenth-century authors located its origins in the alleged *possesso* organized by Constantine for Pope Sylvester. This effort was consistent, as one can see, with the contemporary effort to demonstrate Constantine's foundational role for the papacy. The *possesso* of Pope Sylvester was considered to have taken place after Constantine had made his donation public, and Pope Sylvester had received the crown from Constantine. In his refutation of the Donation, Valla considered the transfer of power from Constantine to Sylvester inconceivable unless a triumph had honored Sylvester as the new leader of Rome.[131] The triumph of a pontiff was in fact the *possesso*, a rite that existed in Valla's time. In early-modern Rome, following the troubled period of the papal "captivity" in Avignon, a

[130] For the *possesso* in general, see Francesco Cancellieri, *Storia de' solenni possessi de' sommi pontefici: detti anticamente processi o processioni, dopo la loro coronazione dalla Basilica Vaticana alla Lateranense* (Roma: L. Lazzarini, 1802); Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 52-55; Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *La città rituale: Roma e le sue cerimonie in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2002), 87-119.
[131] Valla, *On the Donation*, 82.

resurgence of the *possesso* occurred under Sixtus IV.[132] The *possesso* of Pope Sylvester would have had a special resonance for pontiffs, as each newly elected pope had reenacted it through his own *possesso* following the coronation. Evidently, the coronation of the new pope replicated the ceremonial of the handing over of the imperial crown by Constantine and its acceptance by Pope Sylvester.

Seventeenth-century descriptions of the papal *possesso*, a print genre that became increasingly popular, affirmed that Constantine offered a triumph to Sylvester and that, presumably, it was the first papal *possesso*.[133] A medieval fresco cycle featuring the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester* in the chapel of St. Sylvester in the Church of SS. Quattro Coronati in Rome thus anticipated the confirmation of the event through these later texts. Moreover, other late sixteenth-century renderings of the theme prepared the ground for popularizing the belief in Constantine's creation of a *possesso* for Sylvester. These include frescoes in the Constantinian cycles in the Sala delle Carte Geografiche (ca. 1580, fig. III. 4 e), in the Salone di Costantino in the Lateran Palace (fig. IV. 27), and in the Benediction Loggia of the Lateran Basilica (fig. IV. 37).[134] Another confirmation that

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[132] For Sixtus IV and the *possesso* see Stefano Andretta and Antonio Pinelli, *Roma del Rinascimento* (Rome: GLF editori Laterza, 2001), 184-186; Sixtus IV commissioned a depiction of his *possesso* for the fresco cycle in the Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Rome.

[133] A paragraph dedicated to Constantine and Sylvester enumerated the benefices of the Church in Constantine's time: "Costantino Magno Imperatore.. ridotto alla fede, e battezzato per mano di San Silvestro Papa fabricò in Roma molte Chiese; ma principlamente volse si fabricasse...un ricco Tempio in honore di Salvatore.. fu questa detta San Giovanni in Laterano....quali chiese consacrò S. Silvestro adi 9 di Novembre & ivi fece la ceremonia del primo possesso fatto in quella Chiesa." (Giovanni Briccio, *Relatione della cavlacata solenne fatta in Roma alli 23 di Novembre 1644 nell'andare à pigliar' il possesso la Santità di N.S. Papa Innocenzo X* (Roma: Francesco Cavallini, 1644)). A similar paragraph is found in an account of the *possesso* of Alexander VII written by Ranuccio Fallesca da Urbino (published by Francesco Cavalli in Rome in 1655).

[134] In her study on the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, Francesca Fiorani has noted the episode representing Constantine holding the reins of Pope Sylvester's horse, what is called here the *Possesso of St. Sylvester I*, may be seen as transmitting the message on the relationship between Constantine and Pope Sylvester without including the Donation of Constantine into the equation. Francesca Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, 171-208.

these scenes were clearly interpreted as the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* can be found in a treatise on sacred art penned by the Jesuit Giovanni D. Ottonelli. In the chapter dedicated to images of Christian rulers, Ottonelli describes the episode of Constantine fulfilling the role of *officium stratoris* for Pope Sylvester in the Benediction Loggia of the Lateran Basilica as the pontiff's *possesso*. [135] Popular inexpensive texts, as well as more sophisticated texts, demonstrated and propagated the thesis that Constantine staged a *possesso* for Pope Sylvester following the former's act of donation.

Depictions of the *Possesso of St. Sylvester I* had standard features that are in evidence in the medieval fresco in the Chapel of St. Sylvester in the Church of SS. Quattro Coronati (fig. IV. 31) and in in the Lateran complex mentioned above (figs. IV. 27, 37). These frescoes show Constantine holding the reins of the white horse on which Pope Sylvester is mounted during the ceremony that started at the Vatican and concluded at the Lateran. Constantine's recognition of St. Sylvester's authority is effectively signaled by the tiara on Pope Sylvester's head and by the contrast between the elevated position of the pontiff in relation to the emperor. The scenes of the *Possesso* could act as proxies for the political claims of the Donation of Constantine. The *possesso,* as an event perceived as a culmination of Constantine's act of donation, denoted indisputably the transfer of power from Constantine to Pope Sylvester. Its reenactment by subsequent popes made it even more special.

I employ the term *proxy* to characterize the relationship between traditional representations of the Donation of Constantine and the alternatives that were designed to

[135] "Questo grande Imperatore fù tanto humile, che volle condurre il Cavallo del Romano Pontefice nella solenne cavalcata à S. Giovanni Laterano: e si vede a tempo nostro ivi dipinto e figurato." Giovanni D. Ottonelli, *Trattato della pittura e scultura: uso e abuso loro, 1652* (Treviso: Cannova, 1973), 108-109.

take its place. Though presumably selected for its capacity to substitute, a proxy could equivocate the message of that for which it acted as a proxy. Consequently, there is an inherent dissimulative facet of the proxy. We have examined how constitutive elements of the Donation of Constantine were extracted from its traditional representation and inserted into other Constantinian episodes with the goal of creating substitutive meanings for the Donation of Constantine within these host episodes. The pertinence of advancing the term "proxy" over "substiute" lies in its implicit reinforcement of the legal connotation of the Donation document and general ability to replace the traditional representation of the Donation without altering its meaning.

As we shall see in the following chapters, the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* was invoked as a proxy in the absence of the *Donation*. The *Possesso* could also operate as supplementary evidence for the Donation when the Donation was represented. The affirmation of the Constantinian roots of the *possesso* in the seventeenth-century descriptions of the papal *possesso*, when the papacy found itself unable to invoke the Donation directly, demonstrates the reliance on the Donation with the help of dissimulation.

Chapter III

Gregory XIII and the *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine* in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican

The efforts of the Roman Church to reform its institution in response to the significant changes in the politico-religious dynamics of sixteenth-century Europe involved ample revisions of its statutes. The long Council of Trent (1545-1563), representing the climax of the institutional efforts to restore the pristine principles of the Roman Church, attests to the inherent difficulties that the diverse factions had to deal with in order to form a unified voice. The topics requiring special attention varied from sophisticated theological concepts to practical administrative measures. Of utmost importance was the need to carry out a concrete discussion about local clerical jurisdiction and, on a larger scale, about the extent of papal authority. The latter never occasioned a session at the Council of Trent but evidently ignited debates everywhere due to the audacious claim of the papacy to command spiritual and terrestrial power equally. It was believed that while divinity bestowed spiritual authority on popes, their terrestrial power originated in the alleged donation of imperial prerogatives—in the form of attributes and territories—by the first Christian emperor Constantine (306-337 AD) to Pope Sylvester I (314-335 AD). As discussed in the Introduction, the validity of the document had been contested during the Middle Ages but was severely compromised by Lorenzo Valla's critique issued in 1440 (*De falso credita et ementita Constantini*

donatione declamatio). In addition to polemical responses in texts, the papacy turned to visual means to defend the Donation of Constantine, having it twice depicted in the Vatican Palace after Valla's devastating thesis gained popularity in the newly emerging Protestant world (figs. III.1, 11). Canon law had assured the perpetuation of the contested document over the centuries, but in the aftermath of the Council of Trent the Church had to scrutinize its corpus of laws anew. This objective critique of canon law would not only compromise the papal claim to territorial control but would also have repercussions on the survival of the Donation of Constantine as a visual theme.

This chapter analyzes the consequences of the revision of canon law conducted by Pope Gregory XIII as these pertain to the visual representation of the Donation of Constantine. I argue that the pope commissioned a fresco cycle from Tommaso Laureti for the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican in 1582, at a critical moment following the validation of the historical Donation of Constantine in the revised canon law, in the first Post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* (1582). The program for the vault engages in a critical dialogue with the celebrated earlier narrative fresco of the *Donation of Constantine* painted on the wall of the same room in the 1520s by pupils of Raphael. The vault program asserts the enduring validity of the Donation and provides an explanation of the historical document in visual terms. Laureti's frescoes effectively reframe the debate in two important ways. They establish new standards in presenting visual evidence in support of the claims articulated in the original Donation document by enumerating the individual gifts granted by Constantine and by representing the territorial domains transferred to the papacy in terms of classical antique geography. At the same time, Laureti's frescoes represent a response to the call for the reform of painting during

the Council of Trent. They redress a lack of clarity in the earlier *Donation of Constantine* in the same room painted by Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano and tap into contemporary artistic theories about the truth of *storia* in painting. Laureti elaborated a visual means of asserting the authority and prudence of his papal patron Gregory XIII, solving a problem as complex and fraught as the Donation of Constantine was at this time. He utilized pictorial devices (allegory, personification, antithesis, and perspectival illusion) that positioned the Donation in an ambiguous middle ground. The Donation, as *storia*, fell somewhere between unquestionable sacred history and history that could not be corroborated by archeological evidence.

This chapter also contextualizes the papal commission of the vault of the Sala di Costantino during the period of ferment after the Council of Trent. At this time, the Church's endeavored to create rules for sacred painting that governed both subject-matter and visual language. The discussion of the role of images at the Council of Trent reiterated the cultic importance of sacred art for the Roman Church.[136] In addition, the Council urged for decorum, proper usage, and clarity of sacred images. Many theologians invoked the precept coined by Gregory the Great that sacred images should be the *biblia pauperum*. Legibility was considered to be fundamental for the effective impact of images upon the beholder. Consequently, art created just before the Council convened was often judged inadequate due to—to quote Giovanni Andrea Gilio—"the need for a sphinx to interpret it." [137] Some theologians sought to suppress the potential for

[136] *Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent,* Session XXV, "On the invocation, veneration, and relics, of saints, and on sacred images."

[137] Giovanni Andrea Gilio, “Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de'pittori circa le istorie,” in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma,* ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: Laterza, 1960), v.3, 98. Gilio used this phrase for Vasari's frescoes of the *Fasti Farnesiani* in the Palazzo

incongruities between religious dogma and visual images by eliminating any artistic license (Paleotti, *Discorso,* 1582). Others still considered that a certain amount of pictorial ornament would enhance the quality of images (Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Dialogo*, 1564; Gregorio Comanini, *Il Figino*, 1591). For the latter theorist, the proper employment of visual metaphors and metonymies could produce a desirable effect. Historical veracity, variably understood through the lenses of decorum and anachronism, emerged as imperative for a proper perception of art and as a mark of legibility. However, the advocates of historical rigor could not challenge images whose subject matter was considered true doctrine or sacred history by the Holy Office. Even though the Bishop of Bologna Gabriele Paleotti, writing during the pontificate of Gregory XIII (1572-1585), elaborated on the nature of erroneous and dubious images, a depiction of the Donation of Constantine could never be dismissed in this way. The reason for this was that the veracity of the Donation had never been officially questioned by the Holy See. Paleotti himself qualified erroneous an eventual portrayal of Constantine, according to Wycliffe's teachings, in the company of the Devil which meant to signify that Constantine was tempted by the Devil to endow the Church with temporal goods.[138] Images could enforce subjection to established dogma as long as their subject-matter followed the tenets of the dogma in a literal way and was readily comprehensible to their viewers.

Pope Gregory XIII

A degree of unity in the support of papal authority in the aftermath of the Council

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della Cancelleria.
[138] Paleotti, "Dialogo," 277.

of Trent offered a fertile ground for initiating reform and other actions in favor of the Catholic Christendom. Exercising the Tridentine decree regarding the duty of civic authorities to defend the Roman Church, the papacy attempted repeatedly to galvanize the major European Catholic powers in the fight against "infidels."[139] The pivotal and resounding victory of the Catholic forces against the Turks at Lepanto in 1571 gave the papacy the impetus to inaugurate a new illustrious era for the triumphant Roman Church.[140] Pius V (1566-1572), who had prepared for the battle of Lepanto by adopting the banner inscribed with the Constantinian motto "in hoc signo vinces" (fig. III. 2), died soon after the victory "in odore di santità." It was up to Pius V's successor, the Bolognese Gregory XIII, to exploit the potential of the fortuitous conjuncture of events.

Although Gregory XIII (Ugo Boncompagni) did not possess the charisma of his predecessor, he relied successfully on vigorous reforms—and a life led in conformity with these tenets—in establishing the tenor of his papacy. He had participated in the Council of Trent prior to his election. Once a pope he endorsed the reforms outlined by the Council, delegating their implementation to Carlo Borromeo, Gabriele Paleotti, Giovanni Aldobrandini, and Paolo d'Arrezzo. As a requirement of the Council of Trent, Gregory XIII reformed the religious calendar and the *Martirologium Romanum*, with the help of erudite clergymen like Guiglielmo Stirleto, Egnatio Danti, and Cesare Baronius. Nevertheless, Gregory XIII understood the current needs of the Church beyond the *ad literam* application of Tridentine prescriptions. He foresaw the immense benefits that the

[139] *Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent*, Session XXV, Chapter XX.
[140] On the opinion that the victory had been an exaggeration, see Jean-Claude Hocquet, "The cultural and historical context. Venice and the Turks," in *Venice and the Islamic world, 828-1797*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New York: New Haven, Conn.; London : The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press, 2007), 37-51.

Jesuits would bring to the Church through education and preaching, and helped them to expand considerably (fig. III. 3).[141] The city of Rome, the locus of the papal seat, required immediate interventions. In order to make the city attractive and accessible to locals and pilgrims, it was necessary to modify and create streets or to complete the construction of key religious sites for Catholics, chief among them St. Peter's.[142] Belief in the regeneration of Christendom turned attention to Constantine the Great as a critical referential figure in the history of the Church. Pope Gregory XIII made use of Constantine not only in reviving devotional practices by refurbishing Constantinian sites like St. Peter's and the Lateran Baptistery, but also in defining the new calendar. Liturgical needs determined that Gregory XIII reject the Julian calendar and calculate the cycle of time according to the observance of Easter instituted by Constantine in his imperial function at the first Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.[143]

The majority of the scientific and reform projects initiated by Gregory XIII were accompanied by artistic projects with pictorial decorations. For instance, the building of

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[141] Numerous Jesuit colleges opened their doors. The Boncompagni, later Boncompagni-Ludovisi, will remain the Jesuits' supporters for long time. See sixteenth-century sources such as Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *De gli Annali di Gregorio Xiij raccolta per Giacomo I Boncompagni Duca di Sora, divisada P. Maffei dalla Compagnia di Jesu*. Fondo Boncompagni, D 15, BAV, and Marc'Antonio Ciappi, *Compendio delle heroiche et gloriose attioni, et santa vita di papa Gregorio XIIJ* (Giovanni Martinelli, 1591). Also: Richard Bösel, *Jesuitenarchitektur in Italien (1540 - 1773)*, 2 vol (Viena: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1986); Benedetto Vetere and Alessandro Ippoliti, *Il Collegio Romano: storia della construzione* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2003); and Richard Bösel ed., *Orazio Grassi: architetto e matematico gesuita: un album conservato nell'Archivo della Pontificia Università Gregoriana a Roma* (Rome: Argos, 2004).

[142] Not only did Gregory XIII reopen the *fabbrica* of St. Peter's, but he would also honor one of his homonymous patron saints, St. Gregory of Nazianz, in the newly erected *Capella Gregoriana* in the same basilica. The transfer of the saint's relics from Campo Marzio to St. Peter's marked a veritable event. The procession was accounted in diverse literary forms and also depicted in frescoes in the Vatican Palace. For a summary of Gregory XIII's undertakings in the Vatican, see Guido Cornini and Anna Maria De Strobel, "Gregory XIII," in *Barock im Vatican, Kunst und Kultur in Rom der Päpste. 1572-1676*, ed. Max-Eugen Kemper (Heidelberg: Vernissage, 2005), 175-200.

[143] This rule determined the annual celebration of Easter in relation to the first full moon after the spring equinox.

the *Torre dei Venti* reflects the calendar reform, while the subject of its biblical-allegorical frescos was meant to complement the astronomical context.[144] Certain of the Gregorian undertakings resulted in the confirmation of traditional beliefs, as in the case of the doctrine of the papal rights to territorial control, which Gregory XIII restated through the commission of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche (fig. III. 4).[145] On the long walls of this gallery the images of *Italia Antiqua* and *Italia Moderna* (figs. III. 5, 6) bracket a series of maps illustrating the Italian provinces, while the vault is decorated with legends from the history of the Church. The pope's *modus operandi* in these earlier undertakings of his reign offer illuminating clues for this study of his late commission from Laureti for the decoration of the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino (figs. III. 7 a,b) in the Vatican.

The Sala di Costantino

The Sala di Costantino inherited by Gregory XIII contained a highly esteemed fresco decoration dating from the 1520s. Two major pictorial programs were displayed along the main walls of the room: the portraits of popes flanked by virtues and episodes from the *Life of Constantine* painted as fictive tapestries. Below these frescoes was a cycle of monochrome paintings that offered supplementary details about Constantine's deeds before and after his conversion to Christianity (figs. III. 8-11). Pope Leo X de' Medici (1513- 1521) had commissioned the fresco decoration from Raphael as early as

[144] See Nicolas Courtright, *The Papacy and the Art of Reform in Sixteenth Century Rome. Gregory XIII's Tower of the Winds in the Vatican* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Antonio Pinelli, *La Bellezza*, 174-82.
[145] See Pinelli, *La Bellezza*, 155-219; Lucio Gambi, Antonio Pinelli, Alessandro Angeli, Danilo Pivato, *La Galleria delle Carte Geografiche* (Modena: F. C. Panini, 1994), vol.1-3; Francesca Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, 171-208.

1517, but neither the patron nor the artist lived long enough to see the Sala completed.[146] Following Raphael's premature death in 1520, the work was entrusted to his pupils, Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, who would finish two of the four Constantinian episodes during Leo X's pontificate. The *Vision of the Cross* (fig. III. 8) relates the legend of the miraculous apparition of a cross to Constantine just before the confrontation with Maxentius on the battlefield in 312 AD. The subsequent episode, the venerated fresco of the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (fig. III. 9), shows Constantine, who had been assured of victory "in hoc signo vinces" defeating Maxentius in the battle. Initially, the other two episodes were intended to illustrate the presentation of the prisoners taken in the aftermath of the battle of the Milvian Bridge—and the preparation of the blood bath for curing Constantine of leprosy. But the plan changed following the death of Leo X in 1521. Works in the Sala were resumed in 1524 shortly after the election of Clement VII (1523-1534), another Medici pope.[147] Clement VII asked that the *Baptism of Constantine* (fig. III. 10) and the *Donation of Constantine* (fig. III. 11) be painted instead, and thus the cycle was completed in 1525.

Giovanni Francesco Penni frescoed the *Baptism* according to the account of this event supported by the Roman Church, as we have seen in Chapter II, with the action placed in the Lateran Baptistery and performed by Pope Sylvester I. The *Donation of Constantine*, a collaboration between Penni and Giulio Romano, depicts the act of

[146] For the *Sala di Costantino* during the reigns of Leo X and Clement VII see Rolf Quednau. *Die Sala di Costantino*; Guido Cornini, Anna Maria de Strobel, and Maria Serlupi Crescenzi, "La Sala di Costantino," in *Raffaello nell'Appartamento di Giulio II e Leone X: monumenti, musei, gallerie*, ed. Guido Cornini, Christiane Denker Nesselrath, Anna Maria De Strobel (Milan: Electa, 1993), 167-201; Philipp P Fehl, "Raphael as a Historian: Poetry and Historical Accuracy in the Sala di Costantino," *Artibus et Historiae* 14, no. 28 (1993): 9-76; Jan de Jong, "Universals and Particulars," 27-56; Massimo Firpo and Fabrizio Biferali, *"Navicula Petri,"* 35-40.

[147] The project halted during the brief pontificate of Adrian VI (1521-153) between the two Medici popes, Leo X (1513-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534).

donation by Constantine in Old St. Peter's. Before a large and curious crowd, Emperor Constantine is portrayed in a stance of profound devotion, offering to Pope Sylvester I a miniature statue personifying Rome. This statue stands in for the set of regalia and the territorial domains included in the donation. Clement VII's decision to illustrate the Donation of Constantine was very likely a timely defense of the related doctrine. Rolf Quednau has noted that the subject of the Donation may have already appealed to Leo X in response to recent Protestant challenges to the authenticity of the document.[148] Clement VII, who was a bold supporter of the papal infallibility, must have considered the inclusion of the episode to be a critical reiteration of this position.[149]

In the early 1580's, Gregory XIII decided to dismantle the wooden ceiling of the Sala built during Leo X's reign, apparently because the structure was in danger of immanent collapse. He authorized the construction of a vault capable of supporting a fresco decoration in harmony with the existing frescoes on the lower walls.[150] The pope entrusted the project (fig. III. 12) to Tommaso Laureti (1530-1602), a Sicilian painter who had most recently been working in the pope's native city of Bologna. There, Laureti had developed a reputation for his theoretically informed practice and versatility in *quadratura* (illusionistic perspectival painting). The pope assumedly knew of this

[148] Quednau, *Die Sala di Costantino*, 339-446.
[149] Clement VII's *impresa*, also depicted in the Sala di Costantino, *Condor illesus* referred to the purity of the pope that could not be tarnished. Clement VII's stubbornness had led to the drastic deterioration of his relationship with Charles V and ultimately to the Sack of Rome in 1527. But three years later, at the coronation of Charles V as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in Bologna, Clement VII enlivened again his old beliefs when ordering the decoration of a triumphal arch with paintings reproducing the four scenes from the Sala di Costantino.
[150] Giovanni Baglione (1642) recorded that Gregory XIII commissioned works in the Sala di Costantino to finish the decoration left incomplete at the death of Clement VII: " a dipinger la volta della Sala di Costantino, per la morte del pontefice Clemente VII, e per la disaventura dei quei malvagi tempi restata imperfetta." It is unclear if Baglione obtained this information from earlier sources or reached this conclusion by himself, but such a scenario seems implausible unless there had been evidence that Clement VII had wanted to replace the wooden ceiling with a frescoed one at a later moment of his pontificate.

reputation and wished to take advantage of Laureti's expertise in illusionistic painted vaults for the Sala di Costantino.[151]

The flat wooden ceiling had stopped at the level of the upper edge of the fictive tapestries painted on the walls by Raphael's pupils. The building of the vault therefore led to a considerable increase in the height and luminosity of the hall. The geometrical structure of the vault is formed out of a combination of a large quadrangle surrounded by triangular sections of different sizes and by four pendentive-like areas in the corners. Laureti created fictive tapestries within the vault. The hanging fringes around the central section make it appear to be an independent field. The masterly foreshortened *putti* at the base of the vault alert the beholder to the artful play of painted tapestries (fig. III. 13).

According to contemporary accounts of Laureti's project, later quoted selectively by Giovanni Baglione (*Le Vite*, 1642), the central scene was originally supposed to show another Constantinian episode, *Constantine Destroying the Idols*. The subject was later changed to the *Triumph of Religion* (fig. III. 14) when Sixtus V took over following the death of Gregory XIII in 1585 (a development that will be addressed in the next chapter).[152] The other sections of the vault exhibit female personifications of Italian territories and virtues, *putti* holding various ecclesiastical attributes, and emblems of

[151] The ceiling in Palazzo Vizzani in Bologna, showing a scene with Alexander the Great against an illusionistic architecture setting, is the most notable example of Laureti's previous work as a *quadratura* artist.

[152] "Nel mezzo della volta pensò di dipingere quella degna attion del Costantino quando commando che per tutte le parti del suo imperio si gettassero à tera gl'Idoli, e s'adorassi xpo Nro. Redentore mà essendo piacciuto al Sig.r di lirar à s.o quell'anma benedetta il norato Tomasso ni la possoto far' adornata di figure come desiderava pe non esserli stato concesso dal Succerrore d'essa fel. mem mà nonidimeno fece in quell luogo una prospettiva d'un tempio in mezzo al quale un'altare con un crocifisso e per terra una statua di Mercurio fiacassata, che significano la med.ma intentione." *Memorie di papa Gregori XIII*, BAV, Fondo Boncompagni, D 5, fol. 244 (for the whole document see Appendix 1). Baglione mentions only the fact that Laureti had to abbreviate his scheme: "Talche dapoi succedendo Sisto V che amava le cose preste; fecegli fretta, ond'egli fu forazato d abbreviare alcune cose, che andavano secondo il suo genio con maggiore studio condotte." Giovanni Baglione, *Le vite*, 72.

Gregory XIII.[153] These two features within the decorative scheme in the vault−the personifications of the Italian territories and the *putti* showing imperial and ecclesiastical devices—altogether form, what I call, the *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine*.

This restoration of and addition to the Sala di Costantino sheds light on the role of Gregory XIII as a pope who continued certain Medici policies at the Vatican. Indeed, Ugo Boncompagni owed his elevation to the cardinalate to Pope Pius IV de' Medici and his election to the pontifical seat to the scheming of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici.[154] Laureti received, I suggest, the challenging task to forge for Gregory XIII a pictorially and thematically homogeneous Sala di Costantino in which the Medici and the Boncompagni interests were fused.

While the central fresco of the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino, depicting the *Triumph of Religion*, has recently interested scholars, the frescoes connecting Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni's work on the lower walls with Laureti's central piece of the ceiling have elicited little interest. *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* has been considered outside of its Constantinian context, even though it was envisioned as an episode of the Constantinian cycle from the very beginning.[155] While the personifications of Italian territories on the vault of the Sala di Costantino have been related to contemporary maps in the maps in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the

[153] Marcia Hall dates the entire project developed by Gregory XIII to 1585. This would have been impossible except for the central panel, which indeed was finalized by Laureti in 1585-6 but under Sixtus V. See Marcia Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 117.
[154] The conclave that resulted in the election of Ugo Boncompagni was very short, less than forty-eight hours. The quickness was due to the way Cosimo I Medici managed the elimination of Boncompagni's opponent, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, with the help of the Spanish king. See Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes, from the Close of the Middle Ages. Drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and Other Original Sources* (St. Louis, Mo.; London, Herder: Routledge, K. Paul, 1930), Vol. 19, 11-16.
[155] Michael W. Cole, "Perpetual Exorcism in Sistine Rome," in *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, ed. Michael W. Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Burlington, VT : Ashgate, 2009), 57-76.

decoration of the vault *per se* has not been studied.[156] The document in the *Memorie Boncompagni* that describes Laureti's project has been cited occasionally and mainly in connection with the Sistine intervention in the Sala but has not elicited a more profound analysis.[157] Laureti's artistic production in general has been little studied, and, as a consequence, his important addition to the Sala di Costantino has been marginalized in scholarship.[158] Nor has Gregory XIII's papacy received extensive attention from scholars.[159] The conclusions presented in this chapter have therefore been reached substantially from a direct engagement with primary sources. The analysis that follows here does not intend to do full justice to Laureti, but rather to situate the decoration of the vault of the Sala di Costantino within the reform program pursued by Gregory XIII and to explore the essential motivation that inspired the pope to make this intervention. As we

[156] Freiberg, *The Lateran*, 124-131; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, 212.
[157] The document was for the first time partially reproduced by Pastor in an appendix to the pontificate of Gregory XIII and later on incorporated again as an appendix in the abundant list of documents on the Sala di Costantino provided by Quednau. Pastor used it only as an illustration for the artistic undertakings of Gregory XIII, whereas Quednau whose project confined to the Sala during the papacies of the Medici popes did not need to pay too much attention to it. More recently, certain passages of the document have been quoted by scholars dealing with Laureti's work in general (Isabella Collucci, Alessandro Zuccari), with the decoration of the Sala (Guido Cornini, Anna Maria de Strobel, and Maria Serlupi Crescenzi; Jack Freiberg), or with the Sistine period (Flaminia Giorgi Rossi, "Sala di Costantino," in *Roma di SistoV. Le arti e la cultura* (Rome: Edizioni de Luca, 1993**)**. In all these cases, scholars based their quotations on the document reproduced in Pastor (even if not specified, the reference to the old holding signals it).
[158] Recent studies have examined other Roman works by Laureti: the frescoes in the Sala dei Capitani in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (Isabella Colucci) and the paintings in the Church of Santa Susana (Alessandro Zuccari, Pamela Jones).
[159] And certainly much less than that of his immediate successor, Sixtus V. Gregory XIII's contribution the Sala di Costantino has been neglected to the point that the restoration of the Sala in the 1580's is sometimes unfortunately attributed to Sixtus V. See Corinne Mandel, *Sixtus V and the Lateran Palace* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994), 24. A conference organized in Rome in 2004 conjointly by the Università La Sapienza and American Academy in Rome focused on the papacy of Gregory XIII. The papers of this conference have been recently published in the *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* (2009) and in an Italian volume: Cieri Via, Claudia, Ingrid D. Rowland, and Marco Ruffini eds., *Unità e frammenti di modernità: arte e scienza nella Roma di Gregorio XIII Boncompagni (1572 - 1585); [in occasione del convegno internazionale di studi dedicato al patronato artistico e culturale di Gregorio XIII a Roma, all'Università di Roma "La Sapienza" e all'American Academy nel 2004]* (Pisa: Serra, 2012). The papers of this conference became available after I wrote this chapter.

shall see, Gregory XIII aimed primarily to offer an unequivocal visual representation of the Donation of Constantine. The visual representation of the Donation was designed both to emphasize the doctrinal importance of the document itself and to bolster the authenticity of the document by means of an elaborate explanation of the text of the Donation. Before turning to Gregory's fresco program for the new ceiling of the Sala di Costantino executed by Laureti, however, it is useful first to examine how the pope operated as an architect of Catholic reform and how he approached the subject of the Donation prior to this project.

Prudence and Dissimulation as Papal Virtues

To his contemporaries, Gregory XIII did not appear intellectually sophisticated. Nonetheless, the works of art that he commissioned prove that from the very beginning of his pontificate he intelligently utilized visual imagery to his benefit.[160] Gregory XIII's effigy, painted by the Bolognese artist Bartolomeo Passeroti in 1572 to celebrate his election as the new pope, follows within the tradition of official papal portraiture in recording the pope's likeness (fig. III. 15). In contrast, a second composition that Passeroti drew at this time for an allegorical portrait of the pope, which was later engraved by another Bolognese artist Domenico Tibaldi, created a more complex and

[160] "E in oltre cosa degna di consideratione, che non havendo egli atteso più che tanto alle belle et pulite lettere [et non potendo faro distinto giuditio di poesie, nè di compositioni o greche, o latine] con tutto cio favori gli suoi eruditi er it nobili ingegni di qualunq nationе." Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *De gli Annali di Gregorio Xiii*. Fondo Boncompagni, D 15, BAV. The bracketed section was cut by censors (most probably by the pope's natural son Giacomo Boncompagni). For Maffei's *Annali*, see below n. 165.

personalized view (figs. III. 16, 17).[161] The additional care in conception demonstrated by Passeroti and Tibaldi in the allegorical portrait was motivated perhaps by the fact that the engraving had a different purpose than the painted portrait and would reach a much larger audience. The pope may have wanted this allegorical rendering to represent his official portrait for wide dissemination to the Catholic faithful.

Although slightly different, the drawn and engraved versions of this second portrait both present Gregory XIII in an almost Christ-like dimension, owing to his large halo. The pope is accompanied by the two-face allegorical figure of Prudence. The insertion of the halo does not allude to sainthood, but to the divine nature of the pope's authority. Raised to the pontifical throne only a few months after the battle of Lepanto, Gregory XIII conveys to the viewer of the portrait the intended project for his papacy. He aims to govern with divine help, and under the guidance of Prudence, a Christian Church newly revitalized after the triumph of Lepanto, extending Christian influence over the world—denoted by means of the globe. The pope blesses the audience while his left hand rests on a globe supported conjointly by a life-size figure of Prudence and by her assistant, the dragon-serpent. Traditionally, Prudence had been accompanied by a serpent. In the Boncompagni era, however, a hybrid creature consisting of a combination between a dragon and a serpent conveniently facilitated associations between the Boncompagni

[161] Another version of Passeroti's drawing is to be found in an Italian private collection. Chronologically, this drawing could be placed between Passeroti's first drawing and Tibaldi's engraving. For a reproduction of the drawing, see Angela Ghirardi, *Bartolomeo Passeroti pittore (1529-1592)* (Rimini: Luisè Editore, 1990), cat. no. 25; Pinelli, *La Bellezza*, 157. For Passeroti in general, besides this catalogue, see: Angela Ghirardi, "Indagini per Bartolomeo Passerotti: I ritratti di Papa Gregorio XIII," *Il Carrobbio* 15 (1989): 125-130.

seigniorial badge—the dragon—with the serpent of Prudence.[162] With her other hand the figure of Prudence holds a mirror, whose frame bears the Boncompagni winged dragons. In the earlier phase of the composition (fig. III. 16), Passeroti emphasized to an even greater extent the bond between Prudence and Gregory XIII by delineating the pope's profile reflection in the mirror. In the version engraved by Tibaldi, the cardinal virtues of Charity and Justice, inserted as miniature statues adorning the pope's throne, accompany Prudence. The inscription around the globe clarifies the hierarchy among the three virtues, also evident in their different scales, by stating the leading role of Prudence in any action fostered by Gregory XIII. [163]

Contemporary chronicles of Gregory XIII's pontificate, too, attest to the meticulous construction of the pope's personality as an embodiment of prudence. After the election of Gregory XIII, efforts were made to overcome the negative biblical and legendary connotations of the dragon—the Boncompagni seigniorial badge—which were traditionally associated with the devil. These efforts led to the elaboration of heraldic interpretations that redeem the dragon as a symbol of prudence.[164] Abundant testimony of the pope's exemplary prudence surface from the *Memorie Boncompagni* gathered posthumously by his natural son Giacomo Boncompagni. The *Memorie* were requested

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[162] Scholars took literally such opportunities. In order to propel his work at the papal court of Gregory XIII, the Bolognese Ulisse Aldovrandi created a composite animal supposed to resemble a dragon. See Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkley: University of California Press), 112-5; Marco Ruffini, *Le Imprese del drago. Politica, emblematica e scienze naturali alla corte di Gregorio XIII (1572-85)* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2005), 83-105.

[163] The inscription reads: *En vigils gremio prudentia posuit orbem / iustitia et charites ut moderentur eum*. For a different reading of the portrait as a result of the Bolognese emblem culture, see Vera Fortunati, "Lavinia Fontana. Una pittrice nell'autunno del Rinascimento," in *Lavinia Fontana. 1552-1614,* ed. Vera Fortunati (Milan: Electa, 1994), 16.

[164] See Marco Ruffini, *Le Imprese del drago,* 11-29. The dragon was the embodiment of evil in popular legends such as St. George's and St. Sylvester's. The latter is depicted as part of the monochrome cycle in the *Sala di Costantino* in the Vatican as well.

from intimate collaborators of the pope with the intention of providing the Jesuit Giovanni Pietro Maffei with accurate material for composing the official *Annali di Gregorio XIII.* [165] Conspicuously, Giacomo intended to eulogize his father's deeds in order to counterbalance the systematic *damnatio memoria* launched by Sixtus V against his predecessor and simultaneously to legitimize the rights he had acquired through paternal aid.[166] Giacomo himself edited assiduously the *Annali*, but times changed without permitting Giacomo see the publication of the laborious *Annali* come to fruition. Instead, the *Compendio delle heroiche et gloriose attioni, et santa vita di papa Gregorio XIIJ*, by the Sienese Marc'Antonio Ciappi, became, following its publication in 1591, the official monograph on the pontificate of Gregory XIII.[167] Unlike Ciappi's *Compendio*, the *Memorie* and the unedited *Annali* maintain a moderate adulatory tone when evaluating the pope's capacities, with occasional unflattering comments. While there are inherent discrepancies amongst these sources, all agree upon the pope's outstanding prudence.

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[165] Maffei's work had remained in manuscript until the eighteenth century when it was published in the edited version produced under the guidance of Giacomo I Boncompagni (*Degli Annali di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo scritti dal padre Giampietro Maffei della Compagnia di Gesù e dati in luce da Carlo Cocquelines sotto gli uspice della Santita di Nostro Signore Papa Benedetto XIV* (Roma: Girolamo Mainadi, 1742). My quotations are based on the manuscript consulted at the BAV: *De gli Annali di Gregorio Xiij raccolta per Giacomo I Boncompagni Duca di Sora, divisada P. Maffei dalla Compagnia di Jesu*. Fondo Boncompagni, D 15, BAV.

[166] The hatred of Sixtus V for Gregory XIII became proverbial. It had roots as early as in the 1560's when Ugo Boncompagni was a cardinal and Felice Peretti (later Sixtus V) only a Franciscan friar. After his ascension to the pontifical throne, Sixtus V dismantled many of the Boncompagni coats-of-arms attached to different monuments in the city of Rome (for instance, the immense dragons that topped the Quirinal Palace which Sixtus V replaced with a cross). See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Vol. 20, 34-46; Italo De Feo, *Sisto V: un grande papa tra Rinascimento e Barocco* (Milan: Murcia, 1987), 101-110.

[167] The frequent instances of importing phrases from the manuscript *Memorie* show that Ciappi had clearly access to them. Interestingly, Ciappi prepared a second edition for publication (1596) only five years apart from the first. One may rightfully ask if there was a need to satisfy the readership of the *Compendio*. The considerable difference between the two editions lies in the incorporation into the text of the second edition of reasonably sized illustrations that show many of the Roman monuments, and not only, constructed during the pontificate of Gregory XIII and that could be presently seen by any visitor to Rome. The images could perpetuate the appearance of the monuments as designed by Gregory XIII's artists and as adorned with the Boncompagni dragon. Thus, the second edition was necessary for the Boncompagni heirs in order to save the undertakings of Gregory XIII from oblivion.

Prudence had been understood traditionally as an essential virtue that one has to exercise when reflecting upon situations and orienting oneself in society. Classical sources, especially Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* (1140A-1145A), fuelled the discourse on prudence in the early modern period, but in the last decades of the sixteenth century, prudence alone proved insufficient for coping with the complexity of the current world. Many of its attributes suggested that prudence could be grasped in relation to dissimulation. In this period, there was an emerging concern with dissimulation and with its applicability to different spheres (civic, moral, religious, and political).[168] Dissimulation in the early modern period did not have a definite pejorative connotation like that of its counterpart, simulation.[169] But before dissimulation became the word of the day and often a synonym for prudence, there were various attempts to intertwine the two terms conceptually.[170] Justus Lipsius, in his famous *Politica* (IV, 13-14) published in 1589, propounded the concept of *prudentia mixta,* a sort of prudence that necessarily had to conjoin with deceit under the guise of *diffidentia*, *dissimulatio*, *conciliatio,* and *deceptio*.[171] In Lipsius' thought, *prudentia* encapsulates *dissimulatio*. Later thinkers, like the anonymous author of a treatise on prudence conserved in a Chigi manuscript, reversed the relationship between prudence and dissimulation by establishing the former

[168] See Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture*, 8-10.
[169] For my discussion of dissimulation, see Chapter I.
[170] For the equation between prudence and dissimulation: Louis Machon (1643), discussed by Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture*, 9, 184.
[171] For Lipsius in general see Marc Laureys and Christoph Bräunl eds., *The world of Justus Lipsius, a contribution towards his intellectual biography: proceedings of a colloquium held under the auspices of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome (Rome, 22-24 May 1997)* (Turnhout: Brepols. 1998). For Lipsius and prudence, see Paul van Heck, "Two Dutch Academics on Machiavelli," in *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Toon van Houdt (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 47-64; Diana Stanciu, "Prudence in Lipsius's Monita et exempla politica: Stoic Virtue, Aristotelian Virtue, or not a Virtue at All," in *(Un)masking the Realities of Power: Justus Lipsius and the Dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erik de Bom (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 233-262.

as an element of the latter.[172]

As the *Memorie* written by Pope Gregory XIII's close contemporaries attest, the pontiff's performance of prudence and dissimulation in politics was characteristic of the period in which the concept of dissimulation evolved out of prudence:

> Many have expressed the opinion that [the pontiff] was too gullible and easygoing but the truth is that he was very prudent and wise. Due to his great prudence, he often seemed to believe what he knew was in opposition to what he really believed in, because one had to act in this way according to the quality of the individuals and the issues at stake; and he used to say that when one cannot solve a situation, one had to dissimulate in order to avoid worsening it.[173]

In order to rule out any misinterpretation, contemporaries assure us that Gregory XIII practiced prudency in association with dissimulation in the interest of the Church.[174] It was prudent for Gregory not to be too forthcoming or explicit when negotiating in situations when matters were particularly difficult or the outcome unclear. This is the portrait the pope wanted drawn for himself, a man politically guided by the virtue Prudence whose necessary capability of concealment sprung from dissimulation, an

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[172] "La Dissimulazione che nasce da pazienza, charita, e da prudenza, e non dal timore, dalla frauda, e dall'adulazione, è lodatissi.ma e rende l'huomo appresso di tutti gratioso."*Trattato della prudente, et accorta conversatione con gl'altri huomini ci che si venga as acquistar la gratia loro, e la perfettione di se stesso*. "Del Disimulare" (fol. 227r-230). Chigi F VI 133, BAV. The treatise is not exclusively dedicated to the conversation at court but to diverse situations, from talking to the powerful to the populace. It is datable to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

[173] My own translation. This is the case with the subsequent quotations unless otherwise specified. "Fù havuto in opinione di molti per troppo credulo, et facile ma la verità è che egli era prudentiss.o, et sagaciss.o, et per la gran prudenza sua monstrava molti volti di credere quell che conosceva essere in contrario, perche cosi espidiva far.ce secondo la qualità de le persone, et de le negotij che correvano: et soleva dire che dove non si poteva provedere, bisognava dissimulare per non fare peggio," *Memorie di papa Gregori XIII*, Fondo Boncompagni, D 5, BAV, fol. 79. The new art of dissimulation is absent from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia (1593)*, whereas the established *simulatione* is featured.

[174] "E però andava procurer di dar sodisfatt.ne a tutti, e per questo medessimo rispetto s'accomodava alla conditione de i tempi et sofferiva con molta dissimulatione, e longanimità notabili disgusti et offese (salva però sempre la dignità) per venire la fine dei suoi Crisitiani disegni. Fù anche stimato tenace di proposito, et venne imputato da alcuni di soverchia credulità il che parte fù vero, e parte no; perche de i ministri lungam.te esperimentati da lui, non mostrava mai diffidenza alcuna. Ma con certi altri, con i quali era costrettto a dissimulare, mostrava di credere quello che veram.te non credeva." *Annotazioni Diverse, Censure Critiche sopra gli Annali mss. Della Vita e Ponteficato della S. Mem. Di Papa Gregorio XIII compilati per ordine di S.E N. sig.e Giacomo Seniore Buoncompagno Duca di Sora*, Fondo Boncompagni, D 27, fol. 88.

element under the umbrella of Prudence itself.

The Status of the Donation of Constantine in Gregory XIII's Pontificate Prior to 1582

We see this combination of prudence and dissimulation in the manner in which Gregory XIII dealt with the Donation of Constantine. The debate on the Donation was actively and cautiously handled by Gregory from the beginning of his pontificate. As noted above, the pope launched into the reform of canon law soon after his election but the process required considerable time and energy. In the meantime, the pope fully exploited the corollaries of the Donation, such as the claim of land and the right to crown emperors, but avoided a definitive statement on the nature of the document for a while. Once pope, Gregory employed every possible means to augment the territories of the Church, retaining the Donation as the origin of the *Patrimonia Sancti Petri*.[175] In 1575, at the coronation of Rudolph II as Holy Roman Emperor, the pope continued the tradition of invoking past imperial donations in favor of the Church on such an occasion when, at the end of the ceremony, the new emperor was asked to vow his faithfulness to the Church and to renew the donations made by his predecessors.[176] However, the Roman curia, though unanimously supporting papal terrestrial rights, gradually became polarized into

[175] After the coronation, Gregory XIII had his secretary recite the Bull of Pius V regarding the prohibition to estrange or appropriate the goods of the Church. A collection of documents in the Fondo Boncompagni labeled *Miscellanea Ecclesiastici* contains copies of fundamental documents for the papacy, amongst which *Donatio Constantini Imperatoris sempen Augusti facta in favorem S.ta Rom. Ecc.a* and *Patrimonia Sancti Petri nel Principium Donationes*. The *Patrimonia Sancti Petri* ennumerated the donations in chronological order, having the Donation of Constantine conspicuously at the top of the list (See Appendix 2).

[176] "Il Rè dopo che fù coronato, diede à gli elettori gli ornamenti ragali, et andato all'altare, di nuovo guiro di voler essere obediente al sommo Romano Pont.ce et di mantenere le donationi fatte alla Chiesa." *Annali*, Ibid., fol 140. Such a gesture was a clear quotation of Charlemagne's donation by which the first emperor of the Holy Roman empire had renewed the donations of his father Pepin. In 1530, Clement VII invoked the Donation of Constantine at the coronation of Charles V for which occasion, as noted before, he had ordered large panel painting reproducing the four episodes of the Constantinian cycle in the *Sala di Costantino*.

two antagonistic parties under the influence of innovative historical research into the veracity of the Donation document. Gregory XIII was too prudent not to listen to both sides of the debate, although he was probably inclined to subscribe to one of the two positions.

If reforming the corpus of canon law involved an inevitable engagement with the delicate problem of the Donation, the ecclesiastical histories written after the Council of Trent necessitated a similar evaluation of the evidence linked to the document. A concrete opinion had to be expressed in the official ecclesiastical histories commissioned by Gregory XIII in order to refute the Lutheran version of the history of the Church, like that formulated in the landmark *Ecclesiastica Historica* by the Lutheran Flavius Illyricus.[177] This major project was entrusted to the Oratorian Cesare Baronius and the Jesuit Roberto Bellarmino, but the colossal work required extensive time.[178] Baronius would finalize the volume on the Constantinian period only in the early 1590's, after the death of Gregory XIII. In the meantime, the pope did not rule out parallel projects on this topic. In 1578, Cardinal Paleotti arranged on behalf of the pope to have the erudite historian Carlo Sigonio, a Bolognese by adoption, write a more condensed account of the history of the Roman Church.[179] Gregory XIII was acquainted with Sigonio's work, especially with his *De Regno Italie* (1574) and *De occidentali imperio* (1577), both of which the pope aided in passing inquisitional censorship. Both books, however, dealt with the Donation of

[177] Plans for composing a refutation had been proposed since 1565, the last year of Pius IV's pontificate, but they were concretized only with Gregory XIII.
[178] For Baronius' response to Protestant ecclesiastical history with regard to the debate on images, see Scavizzi, “Storia ecclesiastica”, 29-46.
[179] See William McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio*, 346-356. Stefano Zen, "Cesare Baronio sulla Donazione di Constantino tra critica storica e autocensura (1590-1607)," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* (2010, 5, 2/1): 197-206.

Constantine in a manner that did not support the papal claim. Sigonio's even more pronounced opinion against the Donation formulated in his papal commission for Gregory, the *Historia ecclessiastica*, never gained enough support to pass censorship.[180] The advocacy of Gregory XIII against the ban on Signio's earlier works may be indicative of the pope's private opinion regarding the Donation. Gregory XIII may have oscillated in his private views between the refutation of the Donation achieved through the critical analysis of its historical sources and the tradition of the Church he represented at its highest rank. It should not be forgotten that the first edition of the *Mirabilia Urbis* —the official guide to the city of Rome—lacking any reference to the Donation of Constantine was issued for the jubilee year of 1575 under Gregory XIII himself.[181] The climate of incertitude around the Donation during the early years of Gregory's papacy must have been abetted by the pope's own cautious approach, where he exercised both prudence and dissimulation in considering the matter. This incertitude was certainly not a reflection of the views of the radical clerics of the Inquisition who surrounded the pontiff.

No official position on the Donation was taken for a decade (1572-82) and the artistic commissions involving Constantinian imagery executed in the meantime reflect Gregory XIII's enactment of prudence. The Constantinian cycle on the ceiling of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, created in 1580-1581, did not include the *Donation of Constantine*, while the other potentially problematic Constantinian episode, the *Baptism of Constantine*, could still be represented because the Roman curia had reached a consensus regarding the validation of this miraculous event. The five episodes of the

[180] For the fate of this work see Zen, Ibid., 204-206.
[181] For my discussion of the *Mirabilia Urbis* genre and its implication for the Donation of Constantine, see Chapter II.

Constantinian cycle in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche represent *The Vision of the Cross*, *Emperor Constantine building the Basilica of St .Peter*, *Emperor Constantine building the Basilica of St. Paul*, *The Baptism of Constantine*, and *The Possesso of Pope Sylvester* (III. 4 a-e). Antonio Pinelli has noted the absence of the *Donation* in the cycle and has argued that this fact demonstrates the pope's familiarity with Baronius' thesis against the credibility of the Constantinian donation.[182] Though Baronius would publish his opinions much later, he could have held this view as early as the 1570's. Francesca Fiorani, in turn, has attributed the peculiar selection of episodes for the *Life of Constantine* in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche to the significant impact of Sigonio's work, while recognizing the existence of other clergymen who contested the validity of the Donation.[183] Indeed, the papal court hosted at this time, in addition to the zealous clerics of the Inquisition, not only Sigonio or Baronius, with their singular voices, but an environment that was favorable to the dismissal of the Donation, which could have exerted influence on the pope. However, despite the absence of the Donation in the Galleria, other episodes of the cycle could have alluded to the prerogatives bestowed by Constantine on the papacy, namely the *Baptism* (fig. III. 4d) and the *The Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* (fig. III. 4e). As mentioned in Chapter II, the *Baptism* may be considered a "host episode" for the *Donation* because it incorporates essential constitutive elements of the *Donation*, such as the tiara, whereas the *Possesso* could act as a "proxy" for the Donation in its absence. In the rendition of the *Possesso* in the Galleria, the painter captured the emperor not only in the action of holding the reins of Pope Sylvester's horse

[182] Pinelli, *La Belezza*, 187-191.
[183] F. Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, 218.

but also in that of helping the pontiff in getting on (or off) the horse. This additional involvement of Constantine in the wellbeing of the pontiff transmitted the idea of the emperor's strong support of the papacy. Therefore, even in the absence of a visual representation of the Donation in the Galleria, allusions to the prerogatives and power relations stipulated in the text of the Donation were present.

Around this same time, in the 1570s, Gregory XIII took the decision to conclude the decoration of the Sala Regia in the Vatican. He chose to complete the pictorial program not with the Donation theme, as in the earlier cycle desired for this location by Pius IV, but with episodes from recent triumphal Christian history. [184] This could be constructed as an indication that Gregory XIII disregarded the issue of donations altogether early in his papacy. However, the above-mentioned agreement between Gregory XIII with Rudolph II, at the time of the emperor’s coronation, to renew the ancestors' donations proves that this was not the case.

Two themes were given emphasis in the Sala Regia inherited by Gregory XIII: one devoted to key turning-points in the history of the relationship between the papacy and European royalty, and the second exploring the donation theme. Historical donation scenes occupy the six small panels above the doors on the long walls of the Sala,

[184] Pius IV had ordered for the *Sala Regia* a series of historical donations made by: the Longobard King Luitpard (by Giovanni Battista Fiorini), of Pepin (by Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta), of Charlemagne (by Taddeo Zuccaro), of Otto I (by Orazio Sammacchini), and of Peter of Aragon (by Livio Agresti). For the Sala Regia, see Angela Böck, *Die Sala regia im Vatikan als Beispiel der Selbstdarstellung des Papsttums in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997). Loren Partridge and Randolph Starn, "Triumphalism and the Sala Regia in the Vatican," in *"All the World's A Stage": Art and pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. Barbara Wisch, and Susan Scott Munshower (University Park, Pa.: Dept. of Art History, the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Jan de Jong, "The painted decoration of the Sala Regia in the Vatican. Intention and Reception," in *Functions and Decorations: Art and Ritual at the Vatican Palace in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Tristan Weddigen, Sible de Blaauw, and Bram Kempers (Città del Vaticano; Turnhout: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana; Brepols, 2003).

mimicking *sopraporte*. These had been entirely frescoed before Gregory XIII's pontificate. Had Gregory XIII wished to preserve the consistency of the early pictorial program in the Sala Regia, he could not commission donation scenes for the remaining frescoes. Instead, Gregory followed the example of Pius V, who immediately after the victory of Lepanto had employed artists to illustrate that event. Gregory XIII chose to celebrate the recent victories of the Catholics against the Turkish “infidels,” with an additional fresco of the *Battle of Lepanto* and against the Huguenots in the *Night of St. Bartholomew*. These historic events could easily demonstrate both the papacy's leading role in the defense of Christianity and the submissiveness of royalty to the papacy. The slogan "in hoc signo vinces," with its overt Constantinian connotations, could be instrumentalized to channel the otherwise divergent interests of the Catholics towards a common goal. As for the papal territorial possessions, indicated through the Donation theme in the Sala Regia, Gregory XIII preferred to have them represented topographically in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche (fig. III. 4).

Yet the Donation theme, which had not appeared directly in papal commissions throughout the 1570's, was finally visually revived on the ceiling of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche with the *Donation of Countess Matilda* in 1580-1581 (fig. III. 18). For contemporaries, the donation of Countess Matilda passed the test of credibility applied zealously to the various historical donations in that period and was credited as authentic. It follows that nothing would have impeded the inclusion of the *Donation of Constantine* in the Constantinian cycle on the ceiling of the same Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, if the document then under scrutiny at the papal court had been proven unequivocally to be genuine. These instances demonstrate Gregory XIII's keen interest in the donation theme

historically, archeologically, and visually.

As a jurist, the energetic pope Gregory XIII felt competent to solve the thorny issue of the Donation of Constantine as part of his reform program. A review of canon law, the *Corpus Iuri Canonici*, appeared highly necessary in the aftermath of the Council of Trent. In 1566, Pius V had assigned the commission of the *Correctores Romani* with the task. The *Corpus Iuri Canonici* included diverse collections of canon laws, among them the corpus of the *Decretum Gratiani* compiled in the twelfth century by Gratian in Bologna.[185] The Donation of Constantine had become part of the *Decretum Gratiani,* in *Distinctio* 96, owing not to Gratian himself, but to later twelfth-century jurists from the University of Bologna who had interpolated the original text.[186] The revision of the *Decretum Gratiani*, for the publication of its first post-Tridentine edition, emerged as a critical task on Gregory XIII's agenda.[187] Interestingly, historians of the Donation of Constantine have ignored the role played by Gregory XIII in questioning the validity of the Donation of Constantine in the context of the reform of the *Decretum Gratiani.*[188] Church historians, in turn, have been interested in the general process of revision, but the Donation of Constantine has been taken little into consideration. In the following lines, I call attention to the crucial involvement of Gregory XIII in the official policy of the

[185] Besides the *Decretum Gratiani*, the *Liber Extra of Gregory IX*, the *Liber Sextus* of Boniface VIII, the *Clementina* by John XXII, and the *Extravagantes* were parts of the *Corpus Iuri Canonici*.
[186] Scholars believe that the Distinction 96 was added by a different hand probably around 1150; on the development of the *Decretum Gratiani* see Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On Valla's criticism addressed to the additions, see Valla *On the Donation*, 35-37.
[187] It is clear that news on the revision of the *Decretum Gratiani* permeated the entire Europe as publications of the *Decretum* halted after 1573, i.e. shortly after the beginning of Gregory XIII's papacy. For a list of the editions of the *Decretum Gratiani* between 1501 and 1955, see Aldo Adversi, "Saggio di un catalogo delle edizioni del Decretum Gratiani posteriori al secolo XV," in *Studia Gratiana*, vol, 6, 289-395.
[188] Neither Antonazzi nor Vian refer to the revision of the *Decretum Gratiani* under Gregory XIII (which led to the validation of the document).

Donation of Constantine at the papal court through the revision of the *Decretum Gratiani*.[189] I propose to incorporate Gregory XIII's efforts to take a firm position on the Donation into the historical debate on the document and to establish the impact of this decision upon the decoration of the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino.

The new authorized post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* issued under the authority of Gregory XIII had to eliminate any error or flaw that had been "maliciously" or "inadvertently" introduced into Gratian's corpus of decrees over the centuries.[190] The process of amending the *Decretum Gratiani* unfolded over approximately a decade and culminated with the publication of its post-Tridentine *editio princeps*, or *editio Romana*, in 1582.[191] In spite of existing doubts, the revised *Decrretum*

[189] Jack Freiberg has mentioned the approval of the Donation of Constantine by Gregory XIII through the publication of the Decretals of Gratian in 1582 (see Jack Freiberg, "Pope Gregory XIII, Jurist," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 54 (2009): 41-60). I reached the conclusions on Gregory's involvement in the revisions of the *Decretum Gratiani* independently as Freiberg's article has become available only after the completion of my research on this topic. In addition, I call attention to the fact that the edition published by Gregory XIII in 1582 is the first Post-Tridentine edition and contextualize the importance of this event within the general efforts of the Church for reform (amongst them, the interest in legibility of sacred art). In Freiberg's article, there is no reference to the *Annali* prepared under the guidance of Giacomo Boncompagni or other manuscript source referring to the revision of the canon law during the pontificate of Gregory XIII. This makes me suppose that Freiberg reached his conclusion based on the reference found in Ciappi's *Compendio*. Freiberg appears to believe that Gregory XIII was always a supporter of the Donation of Constantine, and refers to the Constantinian cycle in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche as evidence. On the contrary, my research of primary sources led me to conclude that he had prudently navigated the issue in order to avoid conflict within the Curia until consensus on the matter could have been reached (see my discussion above about Gregory XIII, prudence, and dissimulation). The fact that a visual representation of the Donation of Constantine is absent from the cycle in the Gallerie delle Carte Geografiche rather indicates Gregory's ambiguous position with regard to the status of the Donation. Also, in his brief description of the fresco on the vault of the Sala di Costantino, Freiberg includes the central panel with the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* into the Gregorian period. However, as we have seen earlier, this fresco was painted as it is visible today during the papacy of Gregory's immediate successor, Sixtus V.

[190] "[intendo fra simili attioni ne ad altre opere di consolatione et comodo universale**.** Era il decreto che si chiama di Gratiano, parte per inadvertenza di chi l'have compilato, parte anco per la malitia degl'inimici della verità, piena de scorettioni et errori. Greg.o esercitatissimo in quelle materie, con molta fatica sua et di altri Dottori ecc.ti cominciata come dicemmo....] le diede nobilm.te alla stampa. Maffei, *Annali*, D16, fol. 36. Maffei's lines describing the errors in the *Decretum Gratiani* were cut by Giacomo I Boncompagni's censors.

[191] Scholars have called this edition the *editio Romana* in contrast with later editions published by Protestant authors. Thus the appellative *editio Romana* comes not from its place of publication but from the

Gratiani not only approved the Donation of Constantine, but justified it in an ample marginal explanation attached to the section devoted to the deeds of Constantine, in the above-mentioned *Distinctio* 96 (fig III.19).

Historians have interpreted the papacy of Gregory XIII as a gradual capitulation by the aging pope to the radical faction of the curia.[192] Gregory's validation of the Donation would appear to support this thesis. However, no further hesitation on the matter was conceded to the pope. As an immediate consequence of the reconfirmation of the Donation, the *Index prohibitorum* of 1583 enlisted Valla's treatise.[193] It comes as little surprise that the commission from Laureti of the vault of the Sala di Costantino materialized exactly in 1582. The pope's mode of endorsing artistic commissions that mirrored in a timely manner his reform program was once again in evidence because, as we shall see, Laureti's frescos celebrate the ratification of the Donation of Constantine.

Tommaso Laureti's Ceiling Fresco in the Sala di Costantino

As noted earlier, Gregory XIII employed Tommaso Laureti to paint the frescos on the ceiling of the Sala di Costantino most probably on account of Laureti's fame as a *quadratura* painter and the pope's acquaintance with him through a Bolognese social

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Roman Curia who produced it. For the different editions see A. Winroth, 9. I prefer the post-Tridentine *editio princeps* over *editio Romana* because I see the publication of the *Decretum Gratiani* as part of the concerted efforts to publish all fundamental institutional texts of the Church in the aftermath of the Council of Trent. Recently, the first post-Tridentine edition of each of these texts has been aptly called *editio princeps*, a terminology that I adopt for the *Decretum Gratiani*. For instance, for the post-Tridentine *editio princeps* of the *Pontificale Romanum*, see *Pontificale Romanum, Editio Princeps, 1595-6*, ed. Manlio Sodi and Achile Maria Triaca (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), XV.

[192] Valérie Pirie, *The Triple Crown; An Account of the Papal Conclaves from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Day* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1935), 189-201. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 60-77.

[193] Previous editions either omitted or included it. Giovanni Maria Vian discuses different editions of the *Index probihibitorum* when addressing the issue of Valla's heresy; see Vian, *La donazione*, 151.

network.[194] An introduction may have come through Egnatio Danti, the Dominican astronomer and cosmographer in the service of the pope since 1577, who had created the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche in the Vatican for Gregory XIII.[195] Before coming to Rome, Laureti had worked in Bologna where Danti had mastered several cathedrae at the University. [196] As one may notice by perusing Danti's editorial comments to Vignola's *Le due regole della prospettiva* (1583; fig. III. 20), Danti was clearly aware of Laureti's perspective theories for frescoing vaults with illusionistic architecture. In his position at the papal court, Danti could easily have recommended Laureti to the pope. Laureti's biographers, Giulio Mancini and Giovanni Baglione, report that Gregory XIII summoned the artist to the papal court in Rome for the commission of the Sala di Costantino vault.[197] By utilizing Laureti's expertise in a distinctive Bolognese specialty, the pope could create a memorable work of art that was comparable to the earlier Medicean frescoes in the Sala di Costantino.

The message contained within the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino would have been effective only if perceived and understood by the intended audience. The Sala di Costantino was the largest room of the papal apartments formed by the sequential Stanze. When constructed it had been meant primarily to serve as an audience hall. Some functions once pertaining exclusively to the Sala di Costantino had been gradually transferred to the Sala Regia (fig. III. 21), built beginning in the 1530's but finished only under Gregory XIII. The Sala Regia, as its name conveys, was destined for "Emperors

[194] Laureti was present at the papal court in 1582.
[195] A similar hypothesis has been advanced by Alessandro Zuccari. See Zuccari, 2004.
[196] For Danti in general, see Pascal Dubourg Glatigny's introduction to Egnatio Danti, *Les deux règles de la perspective pratique de Vignole, 1583* (Paris: Pascal Dubourg Glatigny, 2003).
[197] "fu honorevolmente chiamato da Papa Gregorio XIII Bolognese in Roma a dipinger la volta della Sala di Costantino." Baglione, *Le vite*, 72. For Mancini, see quote bellow on p. 128.

and Christian Kings who publicly pay respect to the Pontiff, supreme priest, visible Head of the Holy Church", as well as for conclaves, canonizations, and public consistories.[198] However, the Sala di Costantino preserved an important role in the official life at the Vatican and the two rooms could have been used interchangeably.[199] Before commissioning the construction and decoration of the vault of the Sala di Costantino, Gregory XIII frequently used the Sala for staging lectures by famous preachers to members of the nobility.[200]

The fusion between preaching and Constantinian imagery in the Sala di Costantino entails powerful connotations. Word and image altogether generated vivid exempla for the actions of a Catholic nobleman in support of the papacy. These exempla were Constantine's energetic military defense of Christianity and his munificence towards the papacy apparent in the donation that established the institutional basis for the temporal Church.[201] The frescoes provided a subtle demonstration of exemplary behavior for visitors. They also supplied the papacy with a means of affirming its deep belief in the political goals associated with the historical events frescoed on the Sala's walls.

Laureti was evidently aware of the paradigmatic functional and artistic status of the Sala di Costantino. The unprecedented and complex interpretation of the *Donation of Constantine* by Romano and Penni, as we have seen in Chapter II, established it ineluctably as the paradigm of the donation theme. From the pre-existent Constantinian

[198] "Imperatori et Re Chiristiani che publicamente rendono obedienza al Pontefice Romano, sommo sacredote, Capo visibile della Santa Chiesa." The quote is to be found in Vat. Lat. 7031, f. 280, BAV; cited in Anna Maria De Strobel and Fabrizio Mancinelli, "La Sala Regia e la Sala Ducale," in *Il Palazzo Apostolico*, ed. Carlo Pietrangeli (Florence: Nardini, 1992), 73.
[199] Besides the documents that attest this fact, it is reasonable to think so because the Sala Regia could not have been used while works were under way there.
[200] "le predicationi le quali fra l'anno, et da emminenti Dottori nella Sala di Costantino à prelati di corte." Maffei, *Annali*, D16, fol. 165
[201] To which the episodes on the conversion and baptism completed the circle for a neophyte nobleman.

cycle, as contemporary sources testify, Laureti was exclusively concerned with the *Donation of Constantine*, but one can imagine that the pope obliged him to focus on this subject once the publication of the *Decretum Gratiani* was under way. [202] In short, the program would appear to have been designed to reinforce the confirmation of the juridical status of the Donation. Its purpose was to clarify the Constantinian endowment to the Church as exposed in the document of the Donation by picturing the regalia and territories bestowed by Constantine, and what here is called the "object of donation."

While the set of questions advanced by Romano and Penni's depiction of the *Donation of Constantine* may have broadly satisfied Laureti's interpretation of the subject, at the same time Laureti found this rendition inadequate, for it failed to show what the donation meant in literal terms. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the object of donation in the Romano-Penni fresco was represented by means of a statuette of Rome.[203] The unpublished *Memorie Boncompagni* on the papacy of Gregory XIII, written at the request of pope's son Giacomo Boncompagni, is quite revealing in this regard. Laureti apparently saw a flaw in the transliteration of the object of donation reduced in the Romano-Penni fresco to the statue of Rome and criticized it for lacking clarity:

> [Tommaso Laureti] saw, on one wall of the same hall [Sala di Costantino], the donation of Italy made by Constantine to St. Sylvester and his successors by means of a statuette, [in a manner] that was not very comprehensible. [204]

The author of the *Memorie* assumed, whether echoing Laureti's interpretation or not, that

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[202] See Appendix 1.
[203] For a more detailed discussion of the fresco, see Chapter II, p. 67.
[204] "et havendo esso Tomaso [Laureti] vista in una delle pariete della medesima sala la donatione d'Italia fatta da Costantino à san Silvestro, e suoi successori rapresentata per una figuretta non molto inteligibile," *Memorie*, D 15, fol. 243. See Appendix 1.

the Romano-Penni fresco depicted the donation of Italy. There was an interest in the current debate on the Donation not only in the question of the veracity of the document but also in regard to what Constantine possibly could have from a juridical perspective. Besides the fresco of the *Donation of Constantine* by Raphael's pupils, Raphael's earlier adaptation of the same subject in the nearby *Stanza di Eliodoro* (fig. III. 1), which features the tiara as the object of donation, would have seemed equally lacking in clarity in the 1580s. By that time, it seems, the tiara alone would have been perceived as an insufficient means for denoting all the benefits which Constantine transferred to the papacy. Laureti must have pondered over how to expand on the issues advanced by the Romano-Penni fresco. His contribution to the Sala decoration is not a mere appendix to the earlier Donation of Constantine but operates in dialogue with this paradigmatic visualization of the subject. Let us begin by taking a closer look at the statuette in the Romano-Penni fresco (fig. III. 22a) that Laureti apparently found incomprehensible. By the end of the sixteenth century, the miniature statue of Rome supported by Constantine and Pope Sylvester I was considered too unclear because first of all, it stood only for Rome, and secondly it did not successfully transpose the idea of the diversity of the regalia donated by Constantine along with the provinces. Already in the 1560's, Vasari, in the second edition of the *Vite* (1568), identified the statuette as Rome without remarking that the Constantinian donation involved many other territories.[205] It is hard to believe, however, that the Medici pope Clement VII, who reigned when the fresco of the *Donation* was executed in 1524-1525, confined his claims of territorial control only to the

[205] "San Salvestro che ha Gostantino a' piedi ginocchioni, il quale gli presenta una Roma d'oro fatta come quelle che sono nelle medaglie antiche." Only in the second edition of the *Vite* (1568) did Vasari elaborate on the frescoes of the *Sala di Costantino*. Vasari, *Le vite de piu eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori* (1568), Vita di Giulio Romano.

city of Rome. The statuette of Rome, modeled on an ancient visual vocabulary, must have been chosen to signify not just the city of Rome but rather the Roman *oikoumene*, or what Virgil equivalently called *imperium sine fine*, whose epicenter was Rome.[206] By the end of the sixteenth-century when Laureti painted the vault of the Sala, the discussions about what Constantine had really donated intensified. Therefore, at the end of the century, the interpretation of the statuette of Rome as the Roman *oikoumene* did not appear as evident as it may have been for early sixteenth-century observers.

The sensitive issue of territorial control was relevant not only to those who completely dismissed the Donation, but also to those leaders who found themselves inclined to negotiate with the papacy while prioritizing their own interests. Therefore, an explanation of the encoded message communicated by the statuette of Rome was desirable. A certain sort of explanation may exist in the Romano-Penni fresco. Philipp Fehl has distinguished the papyrus held by the monk in Greek garb situated in the chancel area of Old St. Peter's (fig. III. 22b) as the very document of the Donation.[207] Whether this is true or not, in the new decoration campaign in the Sala di Costantino, Gregory XIII and his advisors evidently saw the need for an expanded explanation of the Donation similar to the one presented in the revised *Decretum Gratiani*.

There were other more recent renditions of the donation theme that both Laureti and Pope Gregory could have considered when deciding how to represent, in visual terms, the object of donation in the program for the vault in the Sala di Costantino. The donation theme had been painted in a pictorial cycle in the Sala Regia in the Vatican in

[206] Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.278-9. For the Roman world, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991).
[207] Fehl, "Raphael as a Historian," 57.

the early 1560s (fig. III. 21).[208] These scenes frequently utilized the donation imagery from the Sala di Costantino through the numerous visual quotations. What is important for the present argument is the depiction of the object of the donation in these frescoes and how these depictions relate to the paradigm of the *Donation* by Romano-Penni.

The majority of the artists who painted the donation scenes in the Sala Regia looked at the Romano-Penni fresco as a model. The statuette becomes the symbolic means of referring the object of donation in the majority of these new donation scenes (figs. III. 24, 25). The pope who commissioned the cycle, Pius IV (1559-1565) was a Medici pope. Pius effectively revived the visual theme of the donation with the series of episodes designed for the important Sala Regia at the same moment in which he moved to conclude the Council of Trent as rapidly as possible. The Tridentine decree on the relationship between the Church and secular princes was promulgated on the last session of the Council, on December 4th, 1563. This decree stipulated obedience to and unconditional support for the Church by secular princes. One may say that these stipulations, as formulated in the decree, are visually embodied through historical exempla in the donation scenes in the Sala Regia.

Laureti and Gregory XIII chose not to follow this type of donation scene that by the late 1560's a donation scene type seems to have reached a canonical visual representation based on the *Donation of Constantine* by Romano-Penni. Interestingly, this canonical representation was always patronized by the Medici. Laureti did not depict the act of donation but explicitly enumerated the items of donation. This modification, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, was in line with contemporary opinions about the

[208] See above, n. 184.

legibility of sacred images. Let me turn back to the Sala di Costantino now and examine in a more thorough-going way how Laureti responded to the earlier Constantinian cycle painted on the walls of the room.

Unlike the Sala Regia, the Sala di Costantino, long considered the work of Raphael himself even though it was executed by his pupils, retained the Raphaelesque signature in conception, artistic legacy, and critical fate. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century viewers admired the fresco cycle both for the quality of painting and for the subject matter. While an episode like the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* was deeply admired by contemporary connoisseurs of painting, the *Donation of Constantine*, as noted above, established a paradigm for visualizing the Donation (even as it created some confusion regarding the object of donation).

Laureti scrutinized the cycle of frescoes by Raphael's pupils and decided to complement the pictorial scheme accordingly. On the one hand, the illusion of marble walls covered with tapestries was extended up to the vault as well, creating a unifying motif for the Sala. On the other hand, Laureti had to offer a physical structure capable of supporting a visual explanation regarding the variety of items gifted by the emperor at the time of the donation. The perspectival schemes for which Laureti was appreciated show his evident ability to create the illusion of a unified space on the vault (fig. III. 20). For the vault of the Sala di Costantino, however, he opted to divide the space into self-contained sections much in line with contemporary projects employing the technique of *quadri riportati*. Laureti exercised his perspectival knowledge of *quadratura* in the *oculi* perforations, in the foreshortenings of the putti, and in the consideration of light. The complexity of the subject matter may have encouraged Laureti to think that different

pictorial registers, in which to present particular items included in the donation, offered an unequivocal reading of the subject. Period recommendations voiced by clergymen emphasized the necessity of segregating the permissible allegorical representations from the other parts of the composition in order to achieve clarity.[209]

The majority of the triangular sections of the vault are populated with personifications of ancient Italian provinces which, according to a document preserved in the *Memorie Boncompagni*, were designed with reference to the classical writer Strabo's *Geographia*.[210] When beholding Laureti's fresco, the similitude between the series of triangular fields that encompass the personifications of the Italian provinces and Strabo's abstraction in his geographical narrative seem not simply coincidental. One may argue that Laureti transposed into visual practice Strabo's verbal method of understanding the shape of territories by abstracting them into geometrical figures. For Strabo, both Italy and Sicily had triangular shapes. Equally, the network of lines and shapes that Laureti utilized suggests that the artist engaged in a *paragone* with the works of Raphael and with his pupils in an almost archeological study and restoration. Laureti certainly looked to the ceiling frescoes in the Villa Farnesina (fig. III. 26) and transplanted elements of that scheme into the *Sala di* Costantino. The foliage armature partitioning stories containing pagan deities on the vault of the Loggia Farnesina is transformed into solid architectural ribs in the Sala di Costantino. The triangular shapes, informed by Strabo's geometrical approximations, do not contradict the general scheme of the vault, but are subordinate to it. By revisiting Raphael, a sense of completeness and of homogeneity was

[209] Gilio, "Dialogo," 87-93.
[210] See Appendix. For my discussion about whether we can take the document at the face value with regard to Strabo, see below, p. 117-118.

given to the Sala, a result that served not only Laureti's artistic ambitions but also Gregory XIII's will to pay tribute to the Medici.

As suggested in the foregoing discussion, Laureti conceived of an effective visual translation of the Donation capable of correcting the limitations of the preexisting fresco in the Sala di Costanino through a complex explanation of the document. The object of the Constantinian donation—in its two main categories, the regalia and the territories—had to be comprehensible to the viewer. Within illusionistic *oculi* perforations, hovering trios of *putti* carry triumphantly the regalia with which Constantine was said to have endowed the papacy. Although Laureti sought to situate his narration in an authentic Constantinian period, he also updated the regalia donated by Constantine in response to recent debates. The regalia bestowed upon Pope Sylvester by Constantine are clearly described in the original *Donation* document:

> For this we grant...the diadem−that is, the crown on our head and at the same time the Phrygian tiara and the superhumeral band, but also the purple cloak and the scarlet tunic and all imperial vestments. We confer on him as well the imperial scepters and at the same time pikes and standards and banners and various imperial decorations, and every procession of our imperial eminence and the glory of our power.[211]

The tiara and the scepter, the crown, the miter, and the purple cloak appear within the *oculi* like cardinal points that coordinate the structure of the ceiling (figs. III.12, 48 a-d). Some of the regalia, such as the crown, the scepter, and the purple cloak are literarily depicted, while others were adjusted in the process of the visual translation of the

[211] "Pro quo concedimus...deinde diademam videlicet coronam capitis nostri simulque frygium nec non et superhumerale, videlicet lorum, qui imperiale circumdare assolet collum, verum etiam et clamidem purpuream atque tunicam coccineam et omnia imperalia indumenta seu et dignitatem imperialium praesidentium equitum, conferentes etiam et imperialia sceptra simulque et conta atque signa, banda etiam et diversa ornamenta imperialia et omnem processionem imperialis culminis et gloriam potestatis nostrae." *The Donation of Constantine*, 14. For Valla's systematic criticism of the above-mentioned objects of the Constantinian donation, see Valla, *On the Donation,* 49-53.

document in order to signify the current needs of the papacy. The Phrygian tiara (*phrygium nec*) posed serious problems of suitability. "Who ever heard of a Phrygian tiara in Latin?" lamented Valla.[212] The Phrygian model, along with the crown, was considered to be the prototype for the papal tiara, but it could equally serve as the precursor of the miter. The contemporary tiara had evolved from the imperial crown as well, but the result remained uniquely papal. The association between the tiara and the scepter, in the east *oculus* of the ceiling, signals the unique attributes of the papacy in comparison with other attributes that pertain exclusively to secular power. The miter, unmentioned in the document, shows up in the decoration as the tiara's pendant. Together, the tiara and the miter demonstrate the traditional dual role of the occupant of St. Peter's chair as a pope and as the bishop of Rome. Conspicuously, Pope Sylvester I had fulfilled the position of bishop of Rome before Constantine's act of donation. The depiction of the miter on the ceiling makes the viewer aware of a historical detail included in the document. The additions introduced by Laureti in the process of visual translation aimed at clarifying the nature and the current status of the regalia donated by Constantine.

While the groups of *putti* within the *oculi* form a cycle of their own, the two individual *putti* that occupy the triangles above the windows—holding the crown and the sword respectively—seem to stand apart (fig. III. 47). Interestingly, the crown appears twice on the ceiling, whereas the sword was not even enlisted amongst the objects of the Donation in the document. When accounting for the linguistic and juridical anomalies in the above-quoted paragraph of the forged document, Valla mockingly enlarged the range of objects that Constantine could have donated to Pope Sylvester I: "Why shall we not

[212] Valla, *On the Donation,* 51.

give him a sword, a helmet, and a javelin?"[213] With this rhetorical comment, Valla meant to undermine the claim of the papacy to secular power. The distinctive modality of the *putti* holding the crown and the sword in the triangles above the windows, in relation to the *putti* seen through the *oculi,* calls special attention to their symbolic function. The sword and the crown convey the condensed message of secular power. The position on the vault of the *putti* holding these objects, just off-center, could have alerted the viewer to the idea that secular power was subservient to the sacred, as enacted by Constantine at the moment of his donation. In such a way, a statement was made that sustained rather than contradicted the papal pretensions to secular power.

Had Laureti aimed at an accurate and literal explanation of the Donation, the same principle would have guided his description of the territories donated by Constantine. Yet, the territories depicted are a selection of Italian provinces, and, according to the document preserved in the *Memorie Boncompagni,* their pictorial renditions are indebted to Strabo's previously mentioned descriptions in his *Geographia*. Gregory XIII's concern, as in the case of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, targeted the Italian provinces and not the entire West, as in the Donation. The pope was sufficiently prudent to avoid major conflict with the Catholic monarchies and to limit the itemization of the papal claims only to the Italian territories.[214]

While no famous geographical work composed in the time of Constantine could be consulted, the well-known descriptions of *Italia Antiqua* by Strabo (64 B.C.-24 A.D.) and Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.) could suffice for Laureti and his advisors. Both

[213] Valla, *On the Donation,* 53.
[214] Even by claiming only the Italian territories, the pope asked for the submission of the Catholic monarchs as several of these territories were under either Spanish or French occupation.

geographers lived during the imperial times of Rome. The pro-imperial assessments and the remarks on the preeminence of Italy scattered throughout their writings would have made them attractive to a Roman ecclesiastical entourage supporting the Post-Tridentine construction of the papal monarchy.[215] Strabo's pragmatically descriptive method of presenting the inhabited world in terms of lands, peoples, and possessions in the time of the Emperor Augustus reflects a particular political conception of geography that may have appealed more than Pliny's compendious approach.[216] Moreover, Strabo seems to have had a reputation as an authority on descriptive geography.[217] The pendant portraits of Strabo and Ptolemy incorporated in the 1630's on the top of the cartouches in the representations of *Italia Antiqua* in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche (fig. III. 27) demonstrates that contemporaries perceived the authority of the two geographers concerning distinctive types of ancient Greek geography, the former descriptive, and the latter, scientific. [218] Descriptive geography suited perfectly a pictorial language intended to explicate.

Even though Strabo's attentive portrayal of the world could offer sufficient topographical and ethnographical detail for representing the regions of Italy, Laureti may have benefited, at the same time, from Egnatio Danti's knowledge. Danti had joined the papal court as the pope's cosmographer, in which capacity he designed the program of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche beginning in the late 1570's. Both a general map of

[215] However, Strabo stressed frequently the superiority of the Greeks over the Romans in any aspect of civic life.
[216] For Strabo's political geography see, Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography*, 57-94.
[217] On Strabo and descriptive geography see Daniela Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia: a Greek man of letters in Augustan Rome* (London ; New York : Routledge, 2000).
[218] The *Italia Antiqua* was modified during the renovations of the Galleria initiated by Urban VIII Barberini in the early 1630's. During this restoration, the maps of *Italia Antiqua and Nova* were repainted without altering the meaning with which Danti invested them. See Pinelli, *La Bellezza*, 175.

Italia Antiqua and a series of maps of Italian provinces are featured in the *Galleria delle Carte*. The opposition between the *Italia Antiqua* and *Italia Moderna* (figs. III. 5, 6) materialized as ideologically important. As already observed, the distinction between the two phases of Italian history were meant to signify the passage from paganism to Christianity, a phenomenon that occurred at the state level thanks to Constantine. It was precisely *Italia Antiqua*, which Constantine donated to Pope Sylvester, that Laureti had to depict. The provinces of *Italia Antiqua* depicted on the vault of the Sala di Costantino, along with the imperial regalia, completed the message of the Donation of Constantine.

The personifications of the provinces are revealed to the beholder in a geographical arrangement. Regardless of how one begins to look at these personifications, the passage from one to another leads gradually to the mapping of Italy (fig. III. 12). Laureti's map of Italy reiterates the familiar language of power formulated through geography.[219] Eight of the Italian provinces form pairs, whereas the islands of Cyrniorum (Corsica) and Sicilia (figs. III. 28, 29) appear independently in smaller triangles adjacent to the other provinces, as if reproducing their geographically insular condition. The natural impulse of the viewer to examine the central panel of the ceiling first would generate a reading of the provinces that commenced with those situated towards the windows: Liguria, Hetrusca (Toscana) (fig. III. 30) and the neighboring island of Cyrniorum (Corsica) (fig. III. 28), followed by the pair Latium-Campanus (fig. III. 31) and the island of Sicilia (fig. III. 29). On the other side of the central panel are the

[219] For geography as a language of power, see: Pinelli, *La Galleria*. Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*. For the Roman world, Nicolet, *Space, Geography*. For the Middle Ages, see Daniel Birkholtz, *The King's Two Maps: Cartography and Culture in Thirteenth-Century England*, (New York: Routledge, 2004). Robert Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourtheenth Century*, trans. Sheila Ann Ogilvie, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

personifications of Lucania (Calabria and Basilicata) and Apulia (Puglia) in the first triangle (fig. III. 32), and Picenum (Marche) and Veneti in the second (fig. III. 33).[220] In the triangles populated with pairs of provinces, male personifications of the principal rivers serve as supplementary identifiers for some of the provinces, but not necessarily as common denominators for the pairs. The Tiber at the feet of Latium and Campanus, in fact, traverses only the former; the Arno, underneath Liguria and Hetrusca, nurtures only the latter. Similarly, the Adige passes only through Veneti, whereas the Agri, only Lucania. Laureti observed the coastal territories of mainland Italy and the two major islands of Sicily and Corsica. Regardless of what geographical description Laureti used, provinces such as Umbria or the island of Sardinia become lost in the process of translation fromt the text to the image. He represented the ancient territorial possessions of Italy as though drawing only the contour of *Italia Antiqua*.

The order of the presentation of the lands demonstrates a clear preoccupation with mapping Italy according to the cardinal points and taking into account the natural divider of the Italian peninsula, the Apennines. The quality of the waters and the mountainous chains as regional borders had been emphasized by ancient geographers and by modern interpreters.[221] As suggested above, besides the ancient sources, Laureti may have consulted Danti, who had experienced a similar concern while designing the maps for the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche. In a letter addressed to the illustrious geographer Abraham Ortelius (December 24, 1580), Danti had described his method of representing Italy through the array of regional maps:

[220] Evidently, there is no exact correspondence between ancient and modern-day provinces.
[221] For Strabo, the natural dividers were pure qualities: "A country is well defined when it is possible to define it by rivers or mountains or sea." (Strabo, 2. 1.30).

> Dividing Italy by means of the Apennines, I arranged on one side of the Galleria the Italian regions that are bath by the Ligurian and Tirrenian Seas, and on the other side the Italian regions that are neighbored by the Adriatic Sea and the Alps.[222]

The coincidence between the scientific methods of visualizing the geography of Italy in the two halls of the Vatican palace refurbished by Gregory XIII allows us to consider Danti's contribution to this project, either directly through conversations with Laureti or indirectly through Laureti's study of the Galleria delle Carte. The care exhibited in rendering the provinces in the program highlights the political significance of geography in the period. In addition, geography as a discipline was dominated by an explicit language. In the late sixteenth century, there was an increased interest in developing explicit language for communicating scientific research, and geography was deeply involved due to the sustained exploration of new territories.[223] In his endeavor to explicate the Donation of Constantine, Laureti imbued the frescoes on the vault of the Sala di Costantino with a visual language based on a fusion of poetic and scientific notions.

The depiction of the continents in the lunettes on the upper register of the walls may invite understanding the fresco program to convey that the stipulations of the Donation expand on a global scale. Only three continents are represented: *Europe* above the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, *Asia* above the *Baptism of Constantine*, and *Africa*

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[222] "havendo divisa l'Italia per il mezzo del Monte Appennino, ho posto da una banda della Galleria quella che è bagnata dal Mare Ligustico et Tirreno, e dall'altra quella che è cinta dall'Adriatico e dall'Alpi." Quoted in Pinelli, *La Bellezza*, 164.

[223] For explicative language as part of the scientific discourse, see David Buisseret, "Europeans Plot the Wider World. 1500-1750," in *Geography and Ethnography. Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Richard J.A. Talbert (Chichester, U.K. ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 330-343; Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of describing: natural history in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2006), 136-162.

above the *Donation of Constantine* (figs.III.34-36). *Putti* and *ignudi* frame the personifications of the three continents who seem to emerge from tombs. According to the accompanying inscriptions, the resurrection of the continents occurred due to Constantine's Christian endeavors and marked their transition from paganism to Christianity. This transition involved the foundation of numerous churches in Europe, the discovery of the Holy Cross in Asia, and the diffusion of Christianity in Africa.[224] No hint has surfaced about the subject that was originally displayed in the fourth lunette—above the *Vision of the Cross*—exhibited in Gregory XIII's project, before being replaced by the present coat-of-arms of Sixtus V (fig. 37).[225] It is improbabile that the lunette exhibited the fourth continent known at that time, America, given Laureti's apparent regard for historical accuracy. America was discovered only in 1492 and hence would have been unknown during Constantine's lifetime.[226] Most probably, the forth lunette exhibited Gregory XIII's dragon, which subsequently fell victim to the defamatory campaign of Sixtus V against Gregory XIII and was replaced with the new pope's coat-of-arms.

The insertion of the continents suggests Catholic dominance over the world, a Catholic *imperium sine fine* for which Rome still constituted the epicenter. The word Catholic derives from the Greek *katoliche,* which means universal. A similar statement of the universal governance of the papacy was expressed in the allegorical portrait of the

[224] For Strabo, Africa meant Libya. For the inscriptions, see Appendix 1. It is interesting that the epigraph attached to Europe celebrates Constantine's victory over Licinius not over Maxentius as the fresco underneath it does. (Molto à fl. Constantino mango ecclesia in Europa edificata, à quo Licinius in crucis signo victus sua in Christianos immanitatis, poenas dedit). Thus, the epigraph seems to have a complementary role to the fresco by introducing to the Sala an episode that was absent from the fresco cycle, the defeat of Licinius. The victory over Licinus was a crucial event because it marked the beginning of Constantine's reign as the sole emperor of the Roman Empire.
[225] For an additional motivation for this transformation, see my further discussion in Chapter IV.
[226] Interestingly, one of the contemporary emblem makers, Principio Fabrizi, who created remarkable emblems for the Boncompagni, related the dragon only to "tre parti del mondo".

prudent Gregory XIII drawn by Passeroti and engraved by Tibaldi (figs. III. 16, 17) discussed earlier in this chapter. In the Sala di Costantino, while the insertion of the *Italia Antiqua* into the equation redressed Romano and Penni's lack of reference to territorial domains in the earlier *Donation of Constantine* in the Sala, the inclusion of the continents shifted the interest of the focus towards the universality of religion. The use of geographical personifications permitted, with the help of dissimulation, the declaration of pretentions to dominance through religion. The Constantinian deeds mentioned in the inscriptions buttressed this claim.

Although of secondary significance in relation to the Constantinian episodes, the series of virtues, *ignudi*, and emblems are represented on large areas of the walls and vault, and supplement the contextual details of the commission. Laureti, according to the account in the *Memorie Boncompagni*, was committed to avoiding any repetition of the virtues already incorporated by Raphael's pupils, for he intended his work to complement theirs.[227] The cardinal virtues had already been represented in the walls below. It would appear, however, that because these virtues were key features in the elaboration of the public image of Pope Gregory XIII (as we saw earlier in the chapter), they were included in the vault in the form of emblematic imagery that reads like papal heraldry. The large central field depicting the *Triumph of Religion* is framed on the short sides by four small triangles with Boncompagni emblems that stand for the four cardinal virtues (figs. III. 38-41). Each emblem shows the terrestrial globe, exhibiting a different global geography in each view, flanked by two winged dragons whose twisted tails lock rudders—alluding to the Boncompagni emblem of *Optime Regitur*. Between the heads of the facing dragons

[227] See Appendix 1.

are the attributes of each virtue: the mirror for Prudence, the balance with a sword axis for Justice, the lion for Fortitude, and the *buglia* for Temperance. Prudence (fig. III. 38) lost the mirror during subsequent restorations of the Sala and at present lacks any attribute, but both the document from the *Memorie Boncompagni* and a drawing attached to the *Memorie* attest to this feature in the original state of the fresco.[228]

The cardinal virtues are accompanied a series of eight secondary virtues, displayed in pairs at each corner of the ceiling (Vigilance and Wisdom; Benignity and Clemency; Liberality and Magnificence; Sincerity and Harmony; figs. III. 43-46). The triumphant virtues subjugate pairs of vices and are protected by the emblems of the Church. The keys, the tiara, and the *umbraculum*—medieval imagery denoting the conflation of secular and sacred attributes for St. Peter's successors—are intermingled with the Boncompani coat-of-arms, and are sustained by *ignudi* and *putti* in various positions. Halos circumscribe the tiara, just as in Gregory XIII's allegorical portrait (fig. III. 17), and the cross of the *umbraculum*. They denote the divine source of the papacy. Thus, the two doctrines on the source of papal temporal power, divine and Constantinian, intermingle on the vault. No physical portrait of Gregory XIII is included in the vault to mirror the papal portraits of Leo X and Clement VII in the preexisting cycle on the walls. The profusion of Boncompagni emblems throughout the vault, however, functions satisfactorily as a substitute. The subtle mirroring effect of the two cycles, painted approximately six decades apart, provided continuity and unity to the entire hall.

[228] For the drawing, see *Memorie Boncompagni*, Fondo Boncompagni, D5, Fol.266.v, BAV. Although it is tempting to think that the effacement of the mirror took place during Sixtus V, I have come across no evidence so far.

The Reform of Painting

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the papal commission of the vault of the Sala di Costantino emerged during a critical period after the Council of Trent when the Church endeavored to establish a code for sacred painting that covered both, subject-matter and visual language. While the reform of the Church encompassed sacred painting, in the aftermath of Trent, certain theologians took on the role of councilors on visual art, and their views extended to secular as well as to sacred art. They pointed to abuses, especially with regard to decorum, but their solutions for the existing problems proved not necessarily pertinent for every situation. While some, like Paleotti (*Discorso*, 1582), advocated a clear segregation between sacred and profane art and an extensive control over religious images by the Church, others, like Giovanni Andrea Gilio (*Dialogo*, 1564) though a rigorous reformist, aimed at finding more moderate solutions. Gilio, who had composed his treatise before the conclusion of the Council of Trent, defined three categories of painting: *poetica* , or *favolosa*; *sacra,* synonymous with veracity or truth, and *mista,* especially designed for *istorie mundane.* This last mode was characterized by a mix of the veracious, the *favolosa*, and the false or artificial (*finto*), in such a way that veracity predominated.[229] Paleotti acknowledged the possibility of mix between sacred and profane, but dismissed it as irrelevant for the treatment of sacred art.

The relevant question here is whether Constantinian imagery, in the wake of the Council of Trent, was considered sacred, profane, or a combination of the two, an *istoria mundana*? Constantine had been born into the Roman polytheist religion but became the first Christian Emperor. He was not a saint for the Roman Church, but his life was

[229] Gilio, "Dialogo," 15.

inextricably intertwined with the history of the Church. Pope Sylvester I, who baptized Constantine, and, more importantly, to whom Constantine donated his Western empire, had become a saint. The Donation of Constantine, as we know, was foundational for the establishment of the institutional Roman Church. In Gilio's conception, sacred stood for *istorie* drawn from the Scriptures, whereas in Paleotti's eight classifications of sacred images, the flexible category of "images that pertain to the sacred" could accommodate the Constantinian deeds for the Church as sacred history.[230] Even Paleotti recognized that the distinction between sacred and profane art could be fluid and susceptible to either categorization according to the judgment of the beholder.[231] With regard to Constantine, the stakes were high enough that the Church kept imagery devoted to him closely linked to “the sacred” and encouraged the beholder to engage in a certain reading of the Constantinian imagery.

Regardless of the subject matter, theologians advocated a visual language in painting transparent not only to courtiers but also to common people. Certain clergymen, such as Gilio or Gregorio Comanini (*Il Figino*, 1591), deemed the inclusion of metaphors and personifications permissible embellishments as long as the imitation remained icastic ("resembling nature"), and noted the importance of the personifications of the Virtues for the Church.[232] Paleotti, in turn, emphasized the rhetorical value of representing the contrast between Vices and Virtues, but found the illustration of Virtues problematic. For Paleotti, having Virtues represented as "women with certain attributes," in the attempt to

[230] Paleotti’s eight categories are: Old Testament, New Testament, images made by a holy person, *acheiropoietos*, wonder-making images, anointed images, blessed images, and every painting that pertains to religion. See G. Paleotti, “Discorso,” 197-201.
[231] Paleotti, Ibid., 170-2.
[232] Discussing primarily the personifications of virtues Gilio called the personifications "un altra finzione." Gilio, “Dialogo,” 102.

make them comprehensible to people, debased their qualities.[233] Paleotti's comment, was at cross purposes with his own insistence on explicitness in painting, and echoed his more general concern that women distracted people's thoughts from what should be their main purpose in life, spirituality.[234]

The program for the vault of the Sala di Costantino includes prominent female personifications of the Virtues and the Italian provinces. The clarity of female personifications appealed to Laureti, and Paleotti's critique had little purchase even at the court of a reformist pope like the Bolognese Gregory XIII. In fact, Cesare Ripa's *Iconolgia* (1593)—which was to become the canonical manual on personifications even for the Church—would confirm the validity of the tradition of allegorical representations.[235] When Laureti was preparing the frescos in the Sala di Costantino, however, Cesare Ripa's project for the *Iconolgia* had not even begun.[236] For Laureti, with his commitment to explicitness, the absence of an authorized and standard vocabulary for the majority of the provinces he depicted motivated him to attach denominative epigraphs to the personifications of the Italian provinces. Laureti introduced a degree of *varietà* and he utilized the mannerist device of "antithesis" extensively in elaborating the stances, gender, age, actions, and colors of the figures. Unlike the earlier set of virtues on the walls of the hall, Laureti's eight Virtues are paired with corresponding Vices.

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[233] Paleotti, "Dialogo," 257.
[234] In this case, Paleotti came with a solution, namely to represent the Virtues through portraits of famous personages who embodied the respective virtues.
[235] The first edition of the *Iconologia* (1593) had no illustrations. The illustrations became a constant component of the *Iconologia* starting with the 1603 issue. For Ripa's *Iconologia* as a manual see Gerlind Werner, *Ripa's Iconologia: Quellen. Methode* (Utrecht : H. Dekker & Gumbert, 1977); E. McGrath, "Personifying Ideals," *Art History* 6, 1 (1983), 363-368.
[236] For the impact of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* Emile Mâle's pioneering study remains referential (*L'art religieux de la fin du XVIe siècle, du XVIIe siècle et du XVIIIe siècle; étude sur l'iconographie après le Concile de Trente, Italie-France-Espagne-Flandres* (Paris: A. Colin, 1972)) .

While direct oppositions enhanced the effectiveness of the didactic goal of the Virtue-Vices pairs, for the provinces Laureti used other more subtle strategies of antithesis. In each triangle populated by the personifications of territories, a female figure of a given province is linked with a male figure positioned below which represents a river that runs through her domain. Each female personification is paired, however, with a second female figure who undermines this neat gender antithesis by having no geographical association with the depicted river. Poets like Petrarch, and more recently Torquado Tasso, esteemed such artifice.[237] The frescoes on the vault of the Sala di Costantino show that even though Laureti aimed for a clear translation into visual imagery of the Donation of Constantine, he included pictorial devices that not only buttressed the claim of the Donation document but also served to advance his artistic reputation.

If Laureti's frescoes fulfilled an edifying role in communicating the message of the Donation of Constantine, the painter's efforts to position himself in a *paragone* with Raphael failed to convince his future audience. While Marc'Antonio Ciappi, in the *Memorie di Gregorio XIII*, praised Laureti's frescoes with the term *vaghissime*, Giulio Mancini was not as sympathetic.[238] In the 1610's, Mancini, who generally wrote positively about Laureti, penned the following remarks, notable for their equal degrees of praise and criticism:

> Later, [Laureti] was invited by Gregory XIII to Rome to paint the ceiling in the Sala di Costantino. The frescoes were executed in the artist's usual manner and very well in conformity with his talent, but in comparison with those by Raphael frescoed on the walls below, they appear very ugly,….. or better said, they appear

[237] For a discussion of antithesis in painting and poetry: Comanini, *Il Figino*, 97-99. Also, especially David Summers, "Contrapposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art," *Art Bulletin* LIX (1977): 336-361.
[238] Ciappi, *Compendio*, 6-7.

a satirical composition.[239]

Mancini's comment may be criticized as an exaggeration, as well as an effective rhetorical device for promoting Raphael's painting. The enduring silence regarding Laureti's artistic contribution to the Sala, with the exception of an occasional mention when the Sala came under scrutiny in the following centuries, is convincing evidence that Raphael's legacy overshadowed Laureti. However, it should not be forgotten that, during his own day, Laureti had been esteemed by Gregory XIII as worthy of complementing Raphael's work in the Sala. It was the artist's virtuosity in *quadratura* painting, in particular, that had earned him that reputation.

Laureti proved his excellence in painting through his clever use of the illusionistic architectural construction in the central scene, the *Triumph of Religion*, creating a striking visual experience for the beholder stepping into the Sala di Costantino. Laureti finished the central panel during the year of Sixtus V's pontificate. This fresco, will be explored in the next chapter, as documentary sources reveal that the composition was modified to suit the new pope's different set of interests. The original narrative subject of *Constantine Destroying the Idols* was turned into a more abstract allegory, resulting in a spare rendering of the setting in dramatic perspective.[240]

The Viewing of the Vault of the Sala di Costantino

The orientation of the central fresco of the ceiling, the *Triumph of Christianity*

[239] "Poi, chiamato a Roma da Gregorio XIII per far le pitture nella volta della Sala di Costantino, le condusse al suo solito e secondo il suo talento assai bene, ma in comparatione di quelle di Raffaello ivi sotto, per la comparatione appaiono molto brutte, onde n'hebbe qualche rossore, o per dir meglio, qualche compositione satirica." Giulio Mancini, "Alcuni Aggiungimenti di pitture e pittori," in *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, 232.
[240] See Appendix 1, Chapter IV.

over Paganism, in relation to the position of the viewer below, is revealing about the intended access for visitors to the Sala di Costantino. The Sala had three doors connecting it on the West with Raphael's *Stanze* through the so-called Leo X door, on the East with Raphael's *Loggie* through the Clement VII's door, and on the South with the Sala dei Palafrenieri (figs. III. 50, 51).[241] Previously, both Leo X and Clement VII had paid attention to the impact of the frescoes upon the viewer while entering the hall. When the Sala had been accessed only through the Leo X door, the *Vision of the Cross* and the portraits of two popes confronted the viewer (fig. III. 8). Not arbitrarily, Leo X had chosen to lend his own portrait to the figure of *Clement I*, frescoed to the right of the *Vision of the Cross*. A similar strategy of viewing had appealed to Clement VII. The pope, decided to have himself portrayed once as Sylvester I in the *Baptism of Constantine*, and again, as *Leo I*, to the left of *the Baptism*, on the wall opposite the entrance that he himself had created for receiving visitors to the hall (figs. III. 10, 50, 51). While the doorframes of the Leo X and Clement VII entrances appear homogenously integrated into the decoration, the third door is the result of a later intervention that undermines the wall decorations from the 1520s (fig. III. 49). As Rolf Quednau has inferred from an analysis of the documents regarding the diverse restoration phases of the Sala di Costantino, the entrance on the South was cut at the very latest during the pontificate of Gregory XIII.[242] The orientation for beholding the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* was evidently consciously considered in relation to the South, West, and East entrances. The Clement

[241] Gregory XIII did not use the Stanze as his private apartment so that to need to enter the Sala di Costantino from the Stanze (though he could have done it). The smaller door on the East was created much later by Pius IX. However, Sixtus V had ordered a second door on the West side as well but it was walled up in the 18th century. Urban VIII opened another door on the North side.
[242] Quednau, *Die Sala di Costantino*, 33-5.

VII door, at the end of the *Loggia*, imposed itself as the most spectacular for visitors. However, the route through the unimpressive entrance on the South skirted only a few bays of the Loggia and passed through the Sala dei Palafrenieri instead. Popes who chose to introduce their visitors through the South door, however, would have obtained a dramatic effect that reflected the current concerns with the status of the Donation of Constantine. The viewer would have first faced the visual representation of the Donation painted by Romano-Penni. After 1585, the decoration on the ceiling patronized by Gregory XIII would have supplemented the Donation scene with a satisfactory exposition.

Conclusion

Laureti's *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine* materialized as a result of the fraught and lengthy revision of the canonical constitutions of the Church in the first decade of Gregory XIII's pontificate, leading to the ratification of the Donation document. Gregory XIII commissioned the fresco from Laureti simultaneously with the publication of the first post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* in 1582. The commission was, without a doubt envisioned as a celebration of the validation of the Donation. The project reveals the *modus operandi* of the pope with regard to artistic undertakings. It also pays tribute to the Medici by continuing the policy of depicting donations and responding to the preexisting frescoes in the Sala.

Although the Laureti's *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine* in the vault aimed to elucidate the Donation document, its conceit has paradoxically had a modest impact in the critical fortunes of the Sala di Costantino. This is most plausibly due to the unusual disposition of the subject matter, distributed across a multitude of independent

scenes, instead of in a single, unified pictorial field. The rendering requires the viewer to assemble the pieces. In the end, Laureti's *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine* commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII elaborated only on the object of donation and established a dialogue with the Donation paradigm represented in the Penni and Romano fresco on the walls below. Future representations would raise other questions about the Donation and put forward alternative explanations. For Gregory XIII, the prudent jurist, it was important to illuminate precisely what Constantine had donated, in conformity with the text of the Donation document, in a compelling visual language that was consistent with the reform values of the Church.

Chapter IV

Alternative Explanations of the Donation of Constantine after 1585: Appropriation, Prescription, and Ambiguity

Gregory XIII's first Post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* offered an indubitable approbation of the Donation of Constantine from which subsequent popes could not alienate themselves officially unless a new revision of canon law pertaining to the Donation was requested. In addition to the validation of the Donation, Gregory XIII proposed an explanation of its visual representation with regard to the object of donation. The legacy of Gregory XIII's interventions could lead, and indeed, as this chapter demonstrates, did lead, to rethinking the visual representation of the Donation of Constantine. The subsequent interpretations of the theme continued to mirror the official beliefs of the popes who endorsed them and to focus on the clarification of how to represent the object of donation. This chapter shows that while Gregory's successor Sixtus V (1585-9) in turn advanced a refinement of the theme that secured the validation of the Donation by means of the *Decretum Gratiani* both in public and in less accessible art, Clement VIII (1592-1605) fostered an ambiguous state of affairs with the commission of a public work depicting Constantine in an act of donating.

The Donation of Constantine during the Pontificate of Sixtus V: From Explanation to Prescription

If Gregory XIII considered the commission of the vault of the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican sufficient for the celebration of the official confirmation of the Donation in 1582, his successor Sixtus V (Felice Peretti) maximized the implications of this juridical success for the papacy by completing the Sala di Costantino and asking for three additional visual representations of the Donation within the short period of his pontificate. As we have seen, the Sala di Costantino presented the Donation of Constantine to the viewer once in the Romano-Penni fresco as the act of donating accompanied by the object of donation in the guise of the statuette of Rome (fig. III. 11) and a second time in Laureti's fresco solely as the object of donation signified by means of the provinces and the regalia (fig. III. 12). As will be demonstrated, Sixtus V endeavored not only to contrive a visual explanation of the Donation that could bring together more straightforwardly the representation of the act and of the object of donation but also to proclaim the prescriptive status for this explanation.

The Completion of the Sala di Costantino

At the death of Gregory XIII in April 1585, the central fresco on the vault of the Sala di Costantino remained unfinished (fig. III. 14). Shortly after, the newly elected pope Sixtus V showed determination not simply to finalize the decoration of the Sala but to do it according to his own vision. Even though Sixtus V deeply despised Gregory XIII, he pragmatically appreciated the socio-political value of his predecessor's projects as he decided to carry out several of Gregory's undertakings to completion.[243] At the same

[243] The origin of the animosity between the two had origins in Peretti's resolute position in the conflict over the case of heresy involving the Archbishop of Toledo Barolome Carranza. See Chapter III, n.166.

time, Sixtus V's advisors brilliantly developed a successful strategy to cancel Gregory's marks throughout the city of Rome and to persuade later generations that the city's major transformations owed exclusively to Sixtus V. [244] Obviously, the hatred of Sixtus V for Gregory XIII extended to the Boncompagni entourage as well. However, the Peretti pope temporarily exempted Tommaso Laureti from disgrace so that the painter could complete his work in the Sala di Costantino.[245] According to sixteenth-century sources (the *Memorie Boncompagni*), echoed decades later by the painter Giovanni Baglione (1642), the alleged agreement between the new pope and the painter stipulated that the subject matter of the fresco must be simplified.[246] In effect, *Constantine Destroying the Idols* became the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* by the omission of all human figures (fig. III. 12, 14). The result, the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, shows a classical architectural setting decorated with Sixtus V's coats-of-arms, through whose arch opening a central-plan building framed by obelisks is visible in the background. On its central axis, a large golden crucifix on a pedestal is juxtaposed to a statue of Mercury that lies

[244] This opinion has found a way into modern scholarship as well. However, the primary sources on Gregory XIII's papacy show clearly that several projects attributed to Sixtus V had been initially planned under the pontificate of his immediate predecessor. On the other hand, there are authors who recognize the preparatory role of Gregory XIII's pontificate for Sixtus V's architectural commissions. In his account of Sixtus V's projects published in 1642, Giovanni Baglione gave credit to Gregory XIII where due (most probably because his book was published decades later after Sixtus V's death; see Baglione, *Le vite*, 35-37. For modern scholarship, see Luigi Spezzaferro, "Roma di Sisto V," in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 12 (Torino: Einuadi, 1983), 365-405; Jack Freiberg, "The Lateran Patronage of Gregory XIII and the Holy Year 1575," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54, 1 (1991), 66-87.

[245] Based on a document published by A. F. Orban, some scholars have advanced the hypothesis that Laureti was fired in December 1585, the fresco being finished by one of his assistants, Antonio Scalvati. See Rossi, "Sala di Costantino," 91-2; and Yvan Loskoutoff, *Un art de la Réforme Catholique: La symbolique du pape Sixte-Quint et des Peretti-Montalto (1566-1655)* (Paris: Hónoré Champion Editeur, 2011), 24-5.

[246] See Chapter III, n.150, 152. Luigi Spezzaferro interpreted Baglione's words as a clear sign of change in contemporary understanding of the role of the artist, in other words from supreme artistic creativity to mere execution. Luigi Spezzaferro, "Il recupero del Rinascimento," in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 6*, (Torino: Einuadi, 1981), 200-7.

broken in pieces on the pavement in the foreground.[247] The triumphant crucifix thus supersedes the pagan pantheon, for which Mercury stands as representative. When the fresco of the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* was ready to be admired, Laureti was exiting the papal court of Sixtus V.[248]

Since the late sixteenth century an irreconcilable conflict between Laureti and Sixtus V has been pointed out as the pope's principal reason for changing the Constantinian episode into the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*. Supposedly, Laureti's slow progress with the fresco at the center of the vault irritated the impatient pontiff and triggered the alteration of the subject. [249] If we are to take into account Sixtus V's well-known speediness in actions of any sort and his prolific construction campaign, this explanation seems possible. Although the legend of the pope's rapidity would be sufficient to explain why the subject of the fresco was altered, reasons of a different nature, but equally resonant with the pontiff's interests must be considered. Did Sixtus V ask for other interventions in the Sala? If the answer is positive, then, the change in the design of the central panel would have been part of a larger modification program. In what follows, I will show that the whole array of Sistine additions to the Sala was part of the pope's appropriation of the Sala di Costantino in order to establish the recently

[247] I refer to the crucifix made out of a "golden" material because I am not totally convinced that the material should be bronze as sometimes it is referred to in scholarship. The crucifix depicted here may be a reference to the gold crucifix gifted by Constantine to St. Peter's. For the description of the material as bronze, see Michel Cole, "Perpetual Exorcism."

[248] However, as accounting books of the Sistine period show, Laureti continued to be temporarily employed for appraising paintings of other Sistine commissions such as Cesare Nebbia's and Giovanni Guerra's paintings for the Presepio Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore and for the connecting staircase between the Gregoriana Chapel in St. Peter's and the Vatican Palace (ASR, Camerale I, Busta 1528, fol.23-24). On the other hand, Laureti's expulsion from the Sistine court has been proposed as a political reason for his selection by the Roman senators to fresco the Sala dei Capitani in the Pallazzo dei Conservatori (see Maria Elisa Tittoni, "*Roma di Sisto V*," in *Il Campidoglio e Sisto V*, ed. Luigi Spezzaferro and Maria Elisa Tittoni (Rome: Edizioni Carte segrete, 1991), 165-7; Isabella Colucci, "Tommaso Laureti," 106-108.)

[249] See Chapter III, n. 152.

approved Donation as a significant political tool during his papacy.

The argument develops around two types of actions simultaneously deployed by Sixtus V for appropriating the Sala: *change* and *addition*. Both exploit visual material in the service of doctrine with regard to the content and spatial distribution of ideological messages. Appropriation has been frequently understood as a method of engaging with a source or original through importation, leading to the creation of a separate product maintained in a more or less recognizable relationship with the source.[250] The fact that Sixtus' appropriation occurred by means of interpolation into the source itself invites one to dissect the process through the more appropriate categories of change and addition. It will become clear that the change in the design of the central fresco—the pragmatic decision to depopulate the scene—did not affect the fundamental message of the image but universalized it, allowing the integration of Franciscan ideals dear to the pope. Furthermore, the removal of figures from the scene facilitated its visual comprehension from any location in the Sala. At the same time, appropriation was achieved through the insertion of easily-recognizable Sistine emblematic elements that made the pontiff's contribution to the Sala undeniable. Sixtus V's appropriation of the Sala was thus his earliest statement on the identification of his political creed with Constantine's. This identification implied not only an ascertainment of Constantinian legends, including the Donation of Constantine, but also an adoption of Constantinian political decisions with regard to the implementation of Christianity as reflected in the *Triumph of Christianity*

[250] Julie Sanders has postulated that "appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain." In a critique of Sanders' definition of appropriation and adaptation as opposing terms, Pascal Nicklas and Oliver Lindner have considered that appropriation is part of adaptation. See Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 15-42. Pascal Nicklas and Oliver Lindner eds., *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation: Literature, Film, and the Arts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 1-13.

over Paganism. The Sala di Costantino in the Vatican exhibits a summum of artistic production and an exquisite summa of Constantinian legends. The latter aspect of the pictorial embellishment of the Sala appealed primarily to Sixtus V, who first appropriated it and then recreated its theme according to his own interpretation of the Constantinian material in other fresco cycles in the newly re-erected Lateran Palace and in his private Villa Montalto on the Esquiline (fig. IV. 43). At these locations, as we shall see shortly, visual representations of the Donation of Constantine occupied preeminent places and consistently proposed a visual explanation of the Donation, with clearly prescriptive nuances, different from that brushed by Laureti in the Sala di Costantino under Gregory XIII. But first, we need to look at how Sixtus V's opinion of Constantine led the pope to make the changes and additions just mentioned.

The Sistine interpolation in the Sala was dictated not merely by the necessity to complete the Sala but also by the pope's desire to express his attachment to the figure of Constantine. A comprehensive perspective on the papacy of Sixtus permits us to notice that he clearly esteemed Constantine as an iconic character indispensable to the papacy. However, the proliferation of Constantinian imagery in papal art immediately after his election makes one think that the pope had cultivated such a view even before he had a chance to articulate it publicly after his assumption to the pontifical throne. Although Cardinal Montalto, future Sixtus V, had lived outside the papal orbit during the pontificate of Gregory XIII (1572-1585), his intransigent attitude toward the welfare of the Church kept him in favor among the stricter faction of the Curia, which facilitated his

election to the Chair of St. Peter in 1585.[251] His subscription to ideas promoted in radical circles can be characterized as a combination of natural inclination and reiteration of the policies of those who enhanced his social status. A Franciscan father of humble Marchenese origins, Felice Peretti had been remarked for his oratorical ardor, and his rise in the ecclesiastical hierarchy had happened with the help of the inflexible reformists Pope Paul IV and Pope Pius V. In 1570, Felice Peretti received the cardinalate from Pius V and assumed the title of Cardinal Montalto. Historians have interpreted the papacy of Sixtus V as a continuation of that of Pius V.[252] On the same topic, it is worth pointing out one relevant detail. As already mentioned, Pius V was the pope who mobilized the Catholic forces against the Turks at Lepanto under the Constantinian motto "in hoc signo vinces." In the late 1580's, Sixtus V, still stimulated by the illustrious victory, attempted to organize a crusade against the Turks under the banner with the cross that had its origins in Constantine's *labarum*. Sixtus V's particular devotion of the cross and deference to Constantine through legends related to the Holy Cross had deep roots in the Franciscan cults he had professed since an early age.[253] Besides the fight against "infidels," other aspects of Constantine's recognition of Christianity may have appeared salient to him. Considering that he sympathized with the radical faction of the Curia, he was most probably invested in authenticating the document of the Donation of Constantine during the 1570's. Gregory XIII's pro-Donation rule of 1582 must have been one of the few

[251] Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 20. 11-40. Italo De Feo, *Sisto V: un grande papa*.
[252] For this issue and further bibliography, see Marco Ruffini, *Le Imprese del drago*, 117-124.
[253] The relationship of the Franciscans with the cult of the Holy Cross is well known. There were numerous Franciscan Churches dedicated to the Holy Cross and pictorial cycles devoted to the legend (such as in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence and the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo). Sixtus V often commissioned Franciscan imagery.

decisions taken by Gregory that pleased Cardinal Montalto.[254] Although the medal commissioned by Sixtus to celebrate his pontifical election promotes the resurrection of the papacy in a Franciscan key, by means of the legend of St. Francis and the image of the Lateran Basilica in profound disrepair (fig. IV. 16), the legacy of the Lateran entitled the superimposition of Franciscan values on the Constantinian roots of the papacy. St. Francis offered spiritual guidance, whereas the Lateran Basilica became instrumental in the consolidation of the institution of the Church in its temporal appearance, ideals transparent in the artistic undertakings of the period.

With the gradual implementation of numerous measures in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, Sixtus V could launch himself more productively in making notable modifications to the structure of the institution of the Church and to its main establishment, the city of Rome. His construction energies focused first on the Lateran Palace—the very locus of papal primacy—donated by Constantine to the popes as a dwelling. The internal walls of the Lateran Palace as well as those of other Sistine commissions such as the Vatican Library were adorned with vast pictorial cycles including depictions of Constantine and of his deeds. [255] Evidently, the presence of the Constantine images, and of the *Donation of Constantine* in particular, reinforced the validity of the Constantinian origin of the temporal power of the papacy. In these

[254] Unlike Sixtus did in other numerous instances when he eliminated the Boncompagni coats-of-arms, the very endeavor of Gregory XIII on the *Decretum Gratiani* may have motivated Sixtus V to keep the Boncompagni coats-of-arms in the Sala di Costantino. For Sixtus V's systematic destruction of the Boncompagni coat-of arms, see Chapter III, n. 166, 167.

[255] It is fascinating that even the celebratory medal of the restoration of the statues of the Dioscures also has Constantine as its focus. The medal bears the inscription "R/MEMORIA FL[AVII] CONSTANT[INI] RESTITUTA OPUS PHI[DI]A[E] OPUS PRAXI[TELIS]." Sixtus V was interested in the statues because of their association with Constantine and the Constantinian thermal baths situated on the Quirinal. For a reproduction of the medal see Adolfo Modesti, *Corpus numismatum omnium romanorum pontificum*, vol. 2 (Rome: De Cristofaro, 2003), 129.

frescoes, scholars have recognized Sixtus V's effort to recuperate the ideology of the Donation of Constantine by reaffirming its validity.[256] But it should be clarified that what has hitherto been seen as Sixtus V's ingenuous defense of the Donation was in fact an echo of the canonical confirmation of the Donation established by Gregory XIII in 1582. Sixtus V had the ability to capitalize on the rehabilitated doctrine and to propel himself once again as the initiator of a policy already developed by his predecessor. His campaign started with the appropriation the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican.

It is difficult to know how many modifications in the central panel Sixtus V demanded. Although the document from the *Memorie* offers precious information with regard to Sixtus V obliging Laureti to exclude the "figures" from his initial composition for Gregory XIII, it is laconic with regard to whether the architectural setting visible in the Sala nowadays had been planned prior to Sixtus V or not. Two of Laureti' s preparatory drawings have been conserved but their dates are equally problematic (fig. IV. 1a,b).[257] Both drawings plot out a double perspectival structure. If one compares the drawings and the fresco it becomes clear that Laureti frescoed the left-hand design. Even some of the decorative elements of the architectural setting could have been sketched before Sixtus V's intervention. A scene depicting *Constantine Destroying the Idols* not only could include the crucifix and the statue of a heathen god, but would require an antagonistic contrast between signs of Christianity and paganism. However, other

[256] Luigi Spezzaferro, "Il recupero del Rinascimento,", 184-276. Angela Böck, "Gli affreschi sistini della sala di lettura della Biblioteca Vaticana," in *Sisto V. I. Roma e il Lazio*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo e Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 693-715.

[257] The two preparatory drawings cannot be dated with precision to either the papacy of Gregory XIII or that of Sixtus V because Laureti could have initiated the fresco or decided on the architectural setting before Sixtus V's ascension to the papal throne. Alessandro Zuccari has advanced the hypothesis that the right-hand version was designed for Gregory XIII. See Alessandro Zuccari, "*Rhetorica christiana* e pittura: il cardinal Rusticucci e gli interventi di Cesare Nebbia, Tommaso Laureti e Baldassarre Croce nel presbiterio di S. Susanna," *Storia dell'arte* 107 (gennaio-aprile 2004): 37-80.

decorative elements, such as Sixtus V's coats-of-arms affixed to the back walls of the architectural structure, are conspicuous Sistine additions (fig. IV. 2).

The idea that the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* is emblematic of the papacy of Sixtus V has permeated art-historical studies. Recently, Alessandro Zuccari has noted that the style of the fresco is characteristic of the transition period between Gregory XIII and Sixtus V.[258] While it is clear that the making of the image extended from the pontificate of Gregory XIII into that of his successor, the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* encapsulates a message that indeed has been connected overwhelmingly to the Sistine policy of Christianizing Rome, most notably the policy of urban transformation that frequently involved the dismantling of ancient monuments. The destructive campaign of Sixtus V towards ancient remnants, most famously the Septizonium, has been decried as a barbarous negation of ancient culture in favor of Christianity.[259] However, Sixtus V's appropriation of the Sala di Costantino obliges the beholder of the *Triumph of Religion* to take into account the Constantinian context. With this in mind, Sixtus V's campaign of altering ancient monuments can be understood as a literary and zealous appropriation of the Constantinian project of replacing the pagan world with a Christian one. As already mentioned in Chapter II, Constantine's efforts to eliminate idolatry occupies a significant portion of both ancient and contemporary accounts of his deeds.[260] The solution Sixtus V

[258] Alessandro Zuccari, Ibid.
[259] The porphyry and granite columns of the Septizonium were incorporated in the structure of the Lateran. There were notable contemporary clegymen like Alphonsius Ciaconius and Pompeo Ugonio that prioritized Christian over classical archeology; also numerous guides to the city of Rome warned pilgrims about the dangers of admiring ancient monuments. On the other hand, the modern critical discourse on Sixtus V's "barbarous" campaign against the ancient monuments is very comparable to the one of the early-modern humanists against Constantine's similar acts of destroying ancient art. For an overview of modern interpretations on the Sistine actions, see Leros Pittoni and Gabrielle Lautenberg, *Roma Felix. La città di Sisto V e Domenico Fontana* (Rome: Viviani Editore, 2002), 32-34.
[260] From Eusebius to Reuchlin and Gilio. See Chapter II.

asked from Laureti, the crucifix triumphing over the statue of Mercury, represents the essence of the meaning of the theme *Constantine Destroying the Idols*. A monochrome scene of the destruction of idols already existed in the Sala, though not one that shows Constantine himself as the executor of the action (fig. IV. 3). Rather than avoid the repetition of the episode, Sixtus V conferred a universal message on the scene, a message that would express his wish to annihilate the vestiges of heathen Rome.

The question of why Mercury was chosen from the entire Roman pantheon is one that has troubled modern scholars. Some have emphasized Mercury's role as a messenger of the Olympian deities and as a god of eloquence, and this would seem appropriate given the additional function of the room as a place for staging sacred oratory and sermons. I propose that Mercury's attributes are significant for the heraldry of Sixtus' arch-enemy, Gregory XIII.[261] Representations of Boncompagni heraldic elements are imbued with attributes of Mercury that according to Principio Fabrizi's *Delle allusioni, impresse, et emblemi sopra la vita, opere et attioni di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo* (1588) stand for Gregory XIII's pacific actions (fig. IV. 4) and occupy the separating rib-like panels amongst the main sections of the vault of the Sala (fig. III. 34, 37).[262] By opting for an image depicting the shattered statue of Mercury, Sixtus V announced the termination of the Boncompagni era and, implicitly, the transition to his own. A particular case of heresy, that of the Archbishop of Toledo, caused the initial discontent between Gregory and Sixtus, and idolatry was a form of heresy. The portrayal of a Boncompangni emblem broken in pieces could result in a more enduring effect than the above-discussed

[261] For Mercury as messenger, see Helmut Wohl, "New Light on the Artistic Patronage of Sixtus V," *Arte Cristiana* 80, no. 752 (marte-aprile 1992): 123-134. For Mercury as god of eloquence, see Yvan Loskoutoff, *Un art de la Réforme Catholique*, 24-5.
[262] Later on, Ripa mentions the presence of the caduceus as one of Peace's attributes.

effacement of the Boncompagni signature throughout the city of Rome. Moreover, the Crucifix on the pedestal alluded to the cross on the mountains, the coat-of-arms added by Sixtus V to his heraldry once he became a pope. The crucifix triumphant over Mercury could very well announce the Sistine victory over, or better revenge against, Gregory XIII Boncompagni. In the end, it may be the case that it was not Laureti's sluggish practice that motivated Sixtus V to ask the painter to eliminate human figures from the fresco, but rather the possibility of advancing a supplementary message of equal importance about his papacy in relation to that of his predecessor. The broken statue of Mercury served Sixtus V perfectly in signaling both the Constantinian and the contemporary coordinates of the cycle unfolding in the Sala.

When thinking about the messages conveyed by the *Triumph of Religion* and *Constantine Destroying the Idols*, one may conclude that the former was not an arbitrary replacement of the latter but one that preserved the objective of the replaced episode. The identity between the core meanings of the two scenes has been neglected hitherto in the scholarly literature even though the chronicler of the *Memorie* document aptly noted it. In his concluding lines on the subject of the central panel, he observed that, in the end, the initially-intended scene of *Constantine Destroying the Idols* and the frescoed one, the *Triumph of Religion*, conveyed the same idea:

> [Laureti] thought of depicting in the middle of the ceiling that worthy action of Constantine by which he ordered the destruction of idols all over the empire and to venerate Christ the Savior instead [...] however, [he] painted there the perspectival structure of a temple and in the middle an altar with a crucifix and a broken statue of Mercury on the ground, which together signify the same idea.[263]

[263] "Nel mezzo della volta pensò di dipingere quella degna attion del Costantino quando commando che per tutte le parti del suo imperio si gettassero à terra gl'Idoli, e s'adorassi xpo Nro. Redentore [....] mà nondimeno fece in quell luogo una prospettiva d'un tempio in mezzo al quale un'altare con un crocifisso e

Even though the scene lost the personages, its message remained the same and its physical attachment to the Constantinian cycle depicted in the Sala signaled the connection between *Constantine Destroying the Idols* and the *Triumph of Religion*. The scene *Constantine Destroying the Idols* implied the adoption of Christian instead of heathen cults, whereas the *Triumph of Religion* universalized Constantine's deed. The pope did not disbelieve the theme of the destruction of idols, for one episode of the more elaborate Constantinian cycle in the Casino Felice of the Villa Montalto in fact represented the *Destruction of the Pagan Temples and Idols*.[264] In the Sala, the intent was to offer a generic sense of the implementation of Christianity by Constantine in order to encompass Christianity as a whole. Thus, the scene could address not only a Constantinian moment but also the entire Christian tradition in a scene that equally accommodated the Franciscan ideals so dear to the pope.[265]

Sixtus V's intervention in the Sala was not limited to the central fresco of the vault but extended to areas of the walls as well. The most obvious Sistine feature in the Sala is his rampant lion painted in the east lunette (fig. IV. 5). Other Sistine heraldic elements and emblems invade the fictive entablature that separates the Medici and Boncompagni phases of the decoration. Each section of the entablature hosts a main decorative element repeated all around the walls (fig. III. 7-11). The *monti* and the star alternate on the architrave. On the frieze, the confronted-lions motif, very similar to Domenico Fontana's

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per terra una statua di Mercurio fiacassata, che significano la med.ma intentione." *Memorie di Papa Gregori XIII*, Fondo Boncompagni Ludovisi, D5, fol. 272r.

[264] The cycle, along with the Villa, disappeared in the nineteenth century when the Termini railway station was built on the spot. For more information on the Villa, see below p. 148-149.

[265] Sixtus V was very fond of the Franciscan cause. He proclaimed St. Bonaventura, the official biographer of St. Francis, a Doctor of the Church.

design for the frieze topping the piano nobile of the Lateran Palace (fig. IV. 19a), takes over. To avoid any possible confusion between his lions and the Medici lion, epigraphs mentioning Sixtus' name and the date of the decorative intervention, 1585, were attached to the confronted-lions pattern (fig. IV. 6). The narrow upper register of the entablature received only the star. Yet, eight emblems are applied over the fictive entablature, one at each corner and the other four at the vertical medians of the walls (fig. IV. 5-9). The corner emblems promote the intersection between the particular interests of the current holder of the chair of St. Peter and the perennial function of the pope as spiritual leader. They display the Perreti lion and *monti*, the *Navicula*, and *St. Francis receiving the stigmata*—an image that Sixtus cultivated both for his Franciscan roots and past role as general of the Franciscans, as well as for his belief in the renewal of the Church through Franciscan ideals. St. Francis, marked by the cross, was suggestively placed between the *Vision of the Cross* and the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, two episodes that show the transformative action of the cross for Constantine. The other four emblems depict leitmotifs of the Sistine decorations celebrating the pontiff's public works: the Vatican and Santa Maria Maggiore obelisks, and the Trajan and Antonine columns. Evidently, the well-known public metamorphosis of these monuments from pagan to Christian through exorcism and the addition of Christian symbols is germane here.[266] Within the context of the Sala, one may notice that they multiply the message exposed in the central fresco of the ceiling and represent a clear Sistine application of Constantinian tenets regarding idolatry.

[266] The literature on this topic is vast. See for instance: Cesare D'Onofrio, *Gli Obelischi di Roma* (Rome: Bulzoni,1967); Torgil Magnuson, *Rome in the Age of Bernini* (Humanities Press, NJ: 1986), 16-29; Michael Cole, "Perpetual Exorcism".

If some Sistine elements of the decoration were painted in 1585 as the epigraphs claim, some others may have been incorporated a few years later. The projects of the obelisks and columns materialized only after 1585. Plans for the relocation of the Vatilcan obelisk had been launched very early in the pontificate of Sixtus V and were under way during the 1585 interventions in the Sala. The other three obelisks, based on ancient monuments still in situ or already discovered, were finalized and consecrated from 1587 on.[267] However, it is unclear if images connected to the Sistine projects became the objects of emblems prior to their completion. The two published contemporary sources on Sixtus V's emblems, authored by two of the pontiff's close collaborators, Angelo Rocca (*Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, 1591) and Giovanni Guerra (*Varii emblemi hierogifici*, 1589), offer no information with regard to the date of the emblems.[268] Whichever was the case, the additions made to the fresco cycle show the interest of the pope in affixing his pontifical identity symbols to the Sala.

Sixtus V grasped the importance of orchestrating the viewer's experience in the Sala di Costantino, that, as we have seen in Chapter III, had also been recognized by his predecessors. His rampant lion in the east lunette is the largest coat-of-arms in the Sala. As Sixtus V envisioned, the size discrepancy among the coats-of-arms of the popes who commissioned works in the Sala benefitted him by allowing him to claim the space and its revised pictorial decoration. Most probably after having this coat-of-arms frescoed,

[267] While the Trajan and Antonine columns had remained visible over the centuries, the Santa Maria Maggiore obelisk had been discovered in 1527.
[268] The two authors belong two different occupational categories. Angelo Rocca was the custodian of the Vatican Library, whereas Giovanni Guerra was an artist (co-leader, along with Cesare Nebbia, to the mural decoration teams employed by Sixtus V for several projects). Rocca, *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*; Giovanni Guerra, *Varii emblemi hierogifici usati negli abigliamenti delle pitture fatte in diversi luoghi nelle fabriche del S.mo S.r Nostro Papa Sixto V P.O.M.* (Roma, 1589).

Sixtus V ordered a new entrance to be cut on the west wall so that a visitor entering this door would behold his coat-of arms on the opposite wall (fig. IV. 10, 11; III. 50).[269] This door obliged the visitor to face the *Vision of Constantine*, framed by the portraits of St. Clement I and St. Peter and, more importantly for Sixtus V, topped by the Peretti coat-of-arms. The visitor introduced to the Sala through this door would have become aware of who the new "prince" of the place was. Such a dialogue with the preexisting web of visual confrontations in the hall, already analyzed in Chapter III, between entrances and attributes of the pontiffs—in the form of portraits and coats-of-arms—strongly indicates Sixtus V's endeavor to appropriate the room.

Another pertinent motive for Sixtus V to subvert the decorative scheme of his predecessor may have been his realization that a populated scene such as *Constantine Destroying the Idols* would not have permitted a good vision of the central panel from any location in the Sala. The populated scene would have offered a one-way orientation. In order for the viewer to gain a good sense of the subject illustrated immediately he stepped into the Sala it would have been necessary to access the Sala through the Leo X and Clement VII doors. But the creation of an entrance to allow the beholding of his coat-of-arms first reveals the fact that Sixtus V considered that door a significant point of entry into the room (fig. IV. 11). Sixtus V counted on the capability of viewers to discern correctly the central panel while accessing the hall from any of the four existing entrances (fig. IV. 12 a-c). In addition, the shape of immense cross in the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* could be clearly distinguished from any spot in the Sala by viewers either

[269] Evidently, the cut eliminated a portion of the monochrome painting on the wall. A payment for the remaking the painting around the new door dates in 1587 (ASR, Camerale I, Busta 1528, fol.23-24).

stationary or moving during the diverse activities taking place in the Sala. The compositional lines in the *Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, some of which were indicated by Laureti himself in the drawings, intersect at different points on the vertical axis of the crucifix. The focus of the image results in the crucifix. It is indeed the crucifix, in whose name victory was secured for Constantine, the very basis of Christian doctrine and of Constantine's radical transformation that led to the foundation of the Church as known and promoted at the end of the sixteenth century. It is equally the sign that became synonymous with the pontificate of Sixtus V. Making the cross the focal point and easily discernible to the eye facilitated the transmission of Sistine ideology involving the adoption of Constantinian tenets in the fight against "infidels" of any sort.

Sixtus V's appropriation of the Sala established a relationship with the existing representations of the Donation of Constantine in the same Sala. As we shall see in the next section, when completing the Sala di Costantino, the pontiff did not confine himself to subscribing to the paradigmatic rendering of the Donation by Romano-Penni and its explanation by Laureti.

The Donation of Constantine at the Lateran

The validation of the Donation of Constantine through the Post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582 conferred legitimacy upon the contested tradition. On a more general scale, the Post-Tridentine efforts to reorganize the Church unleashed an energetic movement of defining the essential functional parameters of the institution in its various aspects—administrative, canonical, and liturgical. Despite the brevity of his pontificate, Sixtus V engendered elaborate administrative transformations intended to

solidify the papacy as a monarchy.[270] This is not the place to study the complexity of this process and the friction that emerged in implementing such rules. Here I would like to consider whether the implementation of new rules and procedures affected contemporary imagery, especially that imagery which the papacy cultivated. The papacy, in this case, was operating in a "prescriptive mode" in exercising authority. In the course of transmitting information to recipients, an organ of power, as the papacy was, presented this information in the form rules, doctrines, and policies, prescriptive practices commonly used for establishing codes in languages and ethics.[271] Post-Tridentine theologians—Gilio, Carlo Borromeo, Paleotti, Armerini attempted to regulate art by defining the domains of sacred and profane art, what is proper and improper, good and bad, projecting a particular system of ethics onto art. Prescribing could be manifest through control over and enforcement of a visual theme. The subject of the *Donation of Constantine* of the Sistine period, as will soon be revealed, generated a search on the part of the papacy for a more condensed but equally satisfactory explanation of the Donation and for guidelines to rule this newly-proclaimed explanation absolute. In prescribing, previous representations remain referential and in relation to these, a process of correction applies in order to establish the approved form of expression. To be effective, a prescriptive practice has to avoid dissimulation in conveying the rules of what it seeks to implement but can embrace dissimulation when concealing the motivations behind the

[270] For Sixtus V's various measures (from the decisions on canonizations to the elimination of bandits) see Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Vol. 20, 15-68; , Corinne Mandel, *Sixtus V*, 3-75. For the doctrinal measures regarding the political apparatus of the Church, see Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano*.

[271] Although a notion of visual language is inherent to the analysis of images in terms of a hermeneutical vocabulary of the Donation theme, I do not intend to approach the general issues of linguistic or moral prescriptivism. The literature on the topic is rich. For linguistic prescriptivism, see Keith Allan. *The Western Classical Tradition in Linguistics* (London: Equinox, 2007). For a recent view on moral pre-modern and modern prescriptivism, mostly in British thought, see Jan Narveson, *This Is Ethical Theory* (Chicago: Open Court, 2009).

prescribed rule. It appears that Sixtus V was invested in the former aspect of the prescriptive practice in order to imprint his legacy upon the Donation of Constantine. The period records brush the portrait of the pontiff as a very determined and direct person who, unlike his predecessor, would not seem to exploit the art of dissimulation for political reasons. Sixtus V's bold appropriation of the Sala di Costantino appears consistent with this characterization. Nevertheless, his deep belief in the Constantinian creed led him to commission other elaborate pictorial Constantinian cycles. A look at these cycles elucidates what was proposed with regard to the Donation.

Visual references to the Donation were featured in both public and private Sistine undertakings. As shown in Chapter II, Angelo Rocca, the custodian of the Vatican library during the reign of Sixtus V and one of the contributors to the conceit of its pictorial cycle, considered that the portrait of Constantine in the Vatican Library, in pendant position to that of St. Sylvester, was capable of conveying the message of the Donation (fig. II. 20). Sistine commissions intruded into already-consecrated public spaces exhibiting Constantinian imagery, such as the Sala di Costantino and the Chapel of San Silvestro in the Monastery of SS. Quattro Coronati. [272] The figure of Constantine also penetrated the most intimate spaces of the private sphere of the pontiff, including the Casino of the Villa Montalto on the Esquiline. It is certain that construction at the Villa started when Felice Peretti was only a cardinal (fig. IV. 43). Both the destruction of the Villa in the nineteenth century and the present lack of relevant documentary records impede us from knowing whether the Constantinian pictorial cycle, which included a

[272] I consider the pair St. Sylvester-Constantine painted in the prolongation of the medieval fresco cycle in the Chapel of St. Sylvester of the Monastery of the SS. Quattro Coronati to be its replica. This dissertation does not allow further development of this hypothesis.

Donation of Constantine, was executed before or after Peretti's election as pope in 1585.[273] Although the pictorial themes of the Villa are known to scholars from the compendious description penned by its last owner, Vittorio Massimo, the disappearance of the Constantinian cycle precludes any comparison with the extant *Donations* of the Sistine pontificate.[274] These *Donations*, two in total, were commissioned as parts of Constantinian cycles for the newly remodeled papal palace of the Lateran and loggia of the adjacent Basilica. As we shall see, these *Donations* advanced a literary reading of the document, as the *Explanation of the Donation* did, that sought to demonstrate the historical accuracy of the text of the Donation.

The gargantuan transformations of the city of Rome under Sixtus V became foreseeable from the first project the pontiff embarked upon, the reconstruction of the Lateran Palace (fig. IV. 19). Not that the Vatican complex did not necessitate any mending at that time, but the deplorable state of decay of the Lateran, uninhabited by the papal court since before the so-called "Babylonian captivity" in Avignon, motivated the pope to restore the former seat of the papacy if not entirely to its past function at least to its former architectural glory.[275] The Lateran was a Constantinian site par excellence and the primary seat of the papacy. According to the document of the Donation, as already explained, Constantine had endowed the papacy with the ancient Lateran Palace in perpetuity and built both the Basilica and the Baptistery at the Lateran. The two ecclesiastical monuments received, in honor of their founder, the title "Constantinian."

[273] Baglione recorded that the "Palazzeto" (i.e. the Casino) of the Villa had been built during the pontificate. If we are to take Baglione's statement at the face value, then the fresco cycle was implicitly commissioned after Peretti's election to the pontifical throne. See Baglione, *Le vite*, 35.
[274] Vittorio Massimo, *Notizie istoriche della villa Massimo alle terme Diocleziane* (Rome: Salviucci, 1836).
[275] In fact, St. Peter's still needed substantial work for completion. Sixtus V ordered the completion of the cupola of St. Peter's and other elaborate projects for the Vatican Palace (such as the Library).

Period depictions of the Lateran favor a view including the three Constantinian loci (the palace, the basilica, and the baptistery) (fig. IV. 13 a-c). This view of the Lateran complex allowed a more inclusive description of the site.[276] This is the viewpoint in the medal issued in 1589 for the inauguration of the Lateran Palace event, as well as that found in other frescoes depicting the Sistine project, even though it neglects some notable Sistine architectural modifications and includes instead the Baptistery that received no attention during the Sistine campaign (fig. IV. 14, 15).[277] Sixtus V's project for a new papal residence at the Lateran has been linked to the legend of Innocent III's dream of St. Francis supporting the decaying Lateran Church.[278] As we have seen, the pontiff's election medal captured the gist of this legend (fig. IV. 16). Therefore, Sixtus V would have started reconstructing the Church as an *imitatio* of St. Francis, not only allegorically but literally. To explanations for the renovation of the Lateran based on its ruined condition and Franciscan motivations, I would add the renewed interest in the site stirred by the quarrel over the supremacy of the Lateran over the Vatican during the decades of the Council of Trent.[279] The main argument for the Lateran cause was based upon the Constantinian endowment that had made the Lateran the papal dwelling. While minor restorations had been carried out at the Lateran in the decades immediately preceding the Peretti pontificate, it was Sixtus V who launched the campaign to return the site to the

[276] This view was the one that visitors came across while entering the site from within the precincts of the city. In many ways, the lateral entrance of the Lateran Basilica (facing north) was considered equally important from an early date. The placement of the Loggia of Boniface VIII is an indication that the space in front of the north side of the complex was expected to be the focus of public papal rites.
[277] Under Sixtus V, the piazza in front of the lateral entrance, which received a new Benediction Loggia, was created. During the works, the Constantine obelisk was found and subsequently installed in the Piazza. For the medal see also, Modesti, *Corpus numismatum*, vol. 2, 109-115.
[278] René Schiffmann, *Roma felix. Aspekte der städtebaulichen Gestaltung Roms unter Papst Sixtus V* (Bern: Lang, 1985), 181-191, Mandel, *Sixtus V*, 79-94.
[279] I plan to explore this issue in a different project.

grandiosity it had reached in the Middle Ages and to the dignity ascribed to it by Constantine.

The remodeling of the Lateran Palace (fig. IV. 13c, 14, 19), projected by the architect Domenico Fontana, involved demolishing most of the old structure, moving the location of a few of the preserved components, incorporating the Lateran obelisk into the project after its discovery in 1587, and providing an ample pictorial decoration for the new palace. One of the architectural elements of the old palace that had to be conserved was the Scala Sancta (fig. IV. 13c, at the left). During the restoration, it became evident that the Scala Sancta, subject of profound adulation, needed a different type of access to allow pilgrims to revere the relic without interference within the papal palace. Fontana translated the Scala Sancta so as to adjoin the Sancta Sanctorum and altogether to form the core of an independent structure (fig. IV. 17).[280] Within it, the Scala Sancta leads to the Sancta Sanctorum which is flanked by the Chapels of St. Lawrence and St. Sylvester.[281] The relevance of Constantinian legends for certain spaces of this structure have been discussed in Chapter II. In the present context, it is important to draw attention to the vault of the Chapel of St. Sylvester (fig. IV. 18). Although not directly hosting a *Donation*, the Chapel permitted, due its dedication, a decoration that distills the message of the *Donation of Constantine* and the *Explanation of the Donation of Constantine* in the Sala di Costantino. The frescoes of the Chapel of St. Sylvester are attributable to the same

[280] See Christopher L. C. Ewart Witcombe, "Sixtus V and the Scala Santa," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 44, No. 4 (Dec., 1985), 368-379; Mario Cempanari, "Le <<Scale Sante>> dal Patriarchio Lateranense al santuario sistino: la continuità di una tradizione medioevale," in *Sisto V. I. Roma e e il Lazio*, eds. Marcello Fagiolo e Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 559-582.

[281] The Chapel of St. Sylvester replaced the old Chapel to the right of the Scala Sancta, whereas the old chapel dedicated to St. Lawrence was the Sancta Sanctorum.

team that frescoed the Scala Santa—the vault principally to Cherubino and Giovanni Alberti—and are datable to the spring and summer of 1589. [282] The subject on the vault reveals the high status of the papal symbols acquired ostensibly through the donation of Constantine. The angels in the corners guard the episcopal and papal attributes of Sylvester: the miter, the staff, the tiara and the keys. The oculus on the vault displays the papal apotheosis by means of the tiara hovering above the Peretti *monti* and carried upwardly by *putti*. On each longitudinal side of the oculus, personifications of religious virtues present the crown of thorns and the imperial crown. Similarly to Laureti's fresco for the vault of the Sala di Costantino, the vault in the Chapel of St. Sylvester shows an itemization of articles pertaining to the pope in his function either as the Bishop of Rome or as the secular leader of Rome and the West, as stipulated by the Constantinian donation. The quotation of Laureti's *Explanation of the Donation* in imagery related to St. Sylvester helped in propagating the message about the relationship between the pontiff-saint and Constantine. Nevertheless, as we will see, the *Donation* scenes commissioned by Sixtus V for the Lateran depart from Laureti's solution.

The entire pictorial cycle of the new Lateran palace was conceived to justify and propel the spiritual and terrestrial dominance of the papacy. Political and ecclesiological themes had abounded in the various decorative cycles of the old Lateran Palace, but under Sixtus V the palace received a unified program that could coherently argue for the political statements embedded in it. The execution of the frescoes at the hands of a team

[282] Ewart Witcombe, "An illusionistic Oculus by the Alberti Brothers in the Scala Santa," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 109-110 (1987), 61-72; Alessandro Zuccari, *I pittori di Sisto V* (Rome: Palombi, 1992), 120.; and, Alessandro Zuccarri, "Le decorazioni della Scala Santa e alcune novità attributive nella cappella di San Silvestro," in *Pontificio Santuario della Scala Santa. La Cappella di San Silvestro. Le indagini, il restauro, la riscoperta*, ed. Mary Angela Schroth e Paolo Violini (Rome: Campisano, 2009), 27-47.

led by Cesare Nebbia and Giovanni Guerra lasted several months between 1588 and 1589.[283] Sixtus V entrusted the program to erudite collaborators who had been involved in designing other programs of Sistine projects. In his biography of Cardinal Silvio Antoniano, Giuseppe Castiglione maintained that the Cardinal, with the help of Roberto Bellarmino and Fulvio Orsini, was responsible for the program.[284] Doubts about the degree to which Antoniano can be credited with the program remain, as we know that Castiglione attributed primarily to Cardinal Antoniano the pictorial conceit of the Vatican Library, a cycle to which the custodian of the Library, Angelo Rocca, is known to have contributed substantially.[285] Regardless of who was most responsible for the program of the Lateran, one must allow that the pontiff had a right to intervene and to dictate according to his own judgment. We know that the pope requested that the portraits of the emperors whose coins were discovered during the excavations for the new palace be reproduced in the Salone degli Imperatori of the Lateran Palace (fig. IV. 20).[286] In spite of his councilors' advice that the Church considered some of these emperors heretics, Sixtus V issued a bull proclaiming the veracity of the coins and insisted upon having both the emperors and the coins depicted.

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[283] It seems that Domenico Fontana would have been responsible for employing Giovanni Guerra and Cesare Nebbia. Traditionally, Guerra has been seen as the creator of the sophisticated decorative system, whereas Nebbia that of visual translations of the subjects chosen by a consultant of Sixtus V. According to Baglione, the artists involved in frescoing the Palace were Latanzio Bolognese, Paolo Guidotti, Andrea Lilio, Prospero Orsi, Giovanni Battista Pozzo, Giovanni Battista Ricci, Ventura Salibeni, Cesare Torelli, and Giovanni Baglione himself. See Corrine Mandel, "Palazzo Lateranense," in *Roma di SistoV. Le arti e la cultura*, 1993, p. 94-119.

[284] See Liliana Barroero, "Il Palazzo Lateranense: il cilco pittorico sistino," in *Il Palazzo Apostolico Lateranense*, ed. Carlo Pietrangeli, 218.

[285] For the Vatican Library program, see Corinne Mandel, "Palazzo Lateranense". On the other hand, Giovanni Morello has proposed that the paternity of the decorative program of the Vatican Library should be atributed to the first custodian of the Library, Federico Rinaldi. Giovanni Morello, "I cicli pittorici della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana," in Giovanni Morello and Pierluigi Silvan, *Vedute di Roma: dai dipinti della Biblioteca apostolica vaticana* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 39-60.

[286] See Liliana Barroero, “Il Palazzo Lateranense,” 221.

A comparison of the mural decorations executed in different spaces of the palace demonstrates that priority was given to the *piano nobile*. Finished in 1589, the rooms of the *piano nobile*—dedicated to pontiffs, emperors, prophets, apostles, and to Constantine—emphasize the link between the Old and New Law, the Christian deeds of emperors, and the divine and terrestrial sources of papal authority. Given the focus of this dissertation, an inspection of the spaces that exhibit images related to the last category is most important. The illustration of the divine roots of the papacy appears in the Salone dei Papi (fig. IV. 21). As its name suggests, this hall is dedicated to popes and it is decorated accordingly with portraits of Early-Christian popes from St Peter to St. Sylvester, similar to the series of popes in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican. The portraits of the earliest and latest pope in the series, St. Peter and St. Sylvester respectively, bracket a visual statement on the divine source of the papacy in *Christ Investing St. Peter*.[287] This triptych, frescoed on the south wall of the hall, stresses that until Sylvester the single source of papal authority was divine. Implicitly, it signals that a shift in paradigm occurred with Sylvester. On the lower part of walls (fig. IV. 21, 21a), Sixtus V's most notable undertakings in civic architecture create a rich portrayal of the pontiff promoting not only Felice Peretti's insertion amongst his venerated ancient predecessors but also the pope's support of the theory on the dividing line between the divine and temporal sources of the papacy. The pontiff's attachment to this theory made him prohibit Roberto Bellarmino's *De translatione imperii Romani* (1589), a text that supported unconditionally the temporal power of the pope but attributed this sort of

[287] Although the scene recalls the traditional theme of *Christ Handling the Keys to St. Peter*, I do refer to the scene as *Christ Investing Peter* instead because the keys are not shown in this representation. Corrine Mandel calls it *Christ's Investiture to Peter* (see Mandel, *Sixtus V*, Fig. 63). Genealogies of popes started with Christ. The transition to pontiffs was marked by means of the episode of Christ investing Peter.

power to the divine source rather than to Constantine.[288] Complementarily, the two Constantinian cycles designed for the adjacent Benediction Loggia and for the Salone di Costantino permitted concrete references to the opinion on the Constantinian source of papal temporal power.

Considering the import of the Constantinian deeds for the Lateran complex, the presence of the *Donation of Constantine* in its old decorations would not surprise at all. Indeed, the medieval decorations of the Lateran complex still visible in the 1580's advertised the Donation of Constantine through a visual representation in the portico of the Basilica datable to the end of the twelfth century (fig. IV. 22) and through an epigraph in the *pulpitum* of Boniface VIII (fig. IV. 13 a,c).[289] The reconstruction of the Lateran Palace under Sixtus V did not affect the mosaic decoration of the portico. In fact, the decoration was visible in the 1620's and 1630's, when it was drawn for Cardinal Francesco Barberini, and remained in place until the eighteenth century when it succumbed to the new facade project (fig. IV. 24 a, b). Unlike the portico, Boniface VIII's loggia (ca. 1300) was razed to make room for the new Lateran Palace designed by Fontana.[290] According to Onofrio Panvinio's description of the loggia in his *De praecipus urbi romane Basilicae* (1570) written not long before the demolition, its fresco decoration consisted of three episodes.[291] One showed Boniface VIII blessing the faithful from the

[288] For Sixtus' ban, see Vian, *La donazione*, 154.
[289] For the portico, see Christopher Walter, "Papal Political Imagery in the Medieval Lateran Palace," *Cahiers archéologiques: fin de l'antiquité at moyen âge* XX (1970):155-176; Christopher Walter, "Papal Political Imagery in the Medieval Lateran Palace-II," *Cahiers archéologiques: fin de l'antiquité at moyen âge* XXI (1971):109-136; Richard Krautheimer, *Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, V, 1980, 14-92.
[290] The date of Boniface VIII's loggia is uncertain. It is traditionally associated with the institution of the Jubilee by Boniface VIII in 1300 but no documentation proves that the loggia was built either before or after 1300. Equally difficult is to conclude on how the episodes were displayed. See Charles Mitchell, "The Lateran Fresco of Boniface VIII," *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XIV (1951): 1-6.
[291] Onofrio Panvinio's *De praecipus urbi romane Basilicae* (1570), 113.

loggia, whereas the other two illustrated episodes from Constantine's life: the foundation of the Lateran Basilica and the baptism of Constantine.[292] Additionally, as Panvinio recorded, the loggia decoration contained an inscription that recalled the baptism and donation of Constantine. The two Constantinian episodes advert to the institution of the temporal power of the Church, and indeed Boniface VIII's keen interest in exploiting the Constantinian donation in order to justify his political agenda, has been established. [293] It is also worth mentioning that Boniface VIII was the very pope who provoked dissentions with the French crown and the inevitable transfer of the papacy to Avignon soon after his death. These visual and textual records attest to the direct employment of Constantinian imagery at the Lateran in the later Middle Ages up to time of the abandonment of the Lateran.

When Sixtus V decided to revive the location of the primary seat of the papacy he was cognizant of the preexisting pictorial cycles at the Lateran. In fact, Boniface VIII's *pulpitum*, immortalized in a Sistine fresco illustrating the benediction of the faithful by the pontiff at the Lateran (fig. IV. 14), was functionally replicated in the new loggia built for Sixtus V. This new loggia, commonly called the Benediction Loggia, received a Constantinian fresco cycle that echoed thematically the one of the demolished *pulpitum*. However, the episode of the foundation of the Lateran Basilica, although specific to the Lateran site, was omitted from the new Loggia. Instead, the reference to the Donation of Constantine was transformed from an inscription into a visual rendition of the subject (fig. IV. 35). In addition, the iconographic program of the Lateran palace was to include a

[292] From the entire fresco decoration of the loggia, only a fragment of the episode with Boniface VIII has survived. It is currently placed in the Basilica.
[293] Charles Mitchell, "The Lateran Fresco of Boniface VIII," *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XIV (1951); 1-6.

hall dedicated to Constantine (the Salone di Costantino) featuring the *Donation*. The Constantinian theme defined the Lateran complex of Sixtus V. The pontiff's vision was motivated not only by generic exaltation of the Constantinian roots of the papacy but by exigencies imposed by the important papal rite of the *possesso* whose culminating ceremonies took place at the Lateran.[294] The presence of the Constantine episodes in the portico, in the Salone di Costantino—the very first room of the *piano nobile* to be accessed from the portico—and then in the Benediction Loggia, the appendix at end of the route of the piano nobile, made the Constantinian theme act as a sort of memento for Constantine's foundation of the Lateran and of the papal institution created by his donation (fig. IV. 22, 29, 35).[295] While the Salone was restricted to privileged viewership, both the portico and the Loggia were open to anyone. After the Sistine transformations, each of the two entrances of the basilica confronted the beholder evocatively with Constantine episodes, among which the *Donation* had a substantive role.

In order to have a full appreciation of the pervasive Constantinian connotations at the Lateran it is useful to consider how the early-modern viewers would have experienced the fresco decoration along the privileged route through the complex. Public access to the *piano nobile* was facilitated either by the staircase that connects it to the portico of the Basilica or by the one reachable through the courtyard. From the portico, Sixtus' contemporaries would have been introduced to the Salone di Costantino, whereas

[294] For more on the *possesso*, see Chapter II.
[295] In the engraving attached to Giovanni Severano's *Le sette chiese*, the superimposition of the new plan of the basilica on the old one allows discerning that the old portico was contiguous to the palace projected by Fontana. Also, Fontana, in order to confer unity to the structure, designed the east facade shorter in relation to the other two facades of the palace. The proportions of the east facade its size were calculated in relation to the old facade of the Lateran Basilica. The upper storey of the east facade was added when the facade of the Basilica was remodeled in the eighteenth century.

the other staircase would have led them to the Salone dei Papi (fig. IV. 24 b, 25, 26, 21). Both halls played a substantial role in the palace layout, but the route followed here is imposed by the Donation theme.[296] Therefore, the next stop is the Salone di Costantino. [297] According to the documents reporting appraisals of the frescoes made in 1589, the works in the Lateran Loggia preceded the ones in the Salone by a few months.[298] In the Salone, the fresco cycle, unlike what is seen in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, does not occupy the entire surface of the walls but is reserved to a wide frieze register. The four Constantinian episodes, one per each wall, dominate the pictorial ensemble. Landscapes, Old Testament figures, personifications of Christian virtues, and obelisk emblems inserted amongst the Constantinian episodes complete the pictorial repertoire of the hall. The *Possesso of Pope Sylvester* (fig. IV. 27) welcomes visitors.[299] By holding the reins of the white horse of Pope Sylvester, Constantine acts as a strator for the pope during the *possesso* ceremony. Following the direction imposed by the reading of the *Possesso*, one beholds the *Baptism of Constantine* next (fig. IV. 28), and then the *Donation of Constantine* (fig. IV. 29, 29a), and then the *Vision of the Cross* (fig. IV. 30). The cycle is both similar to and different from the one in the Sala di Costantino. Visually, the *Vision of the Cross* and the *Baptism of Constantine* rely heavily on the precedents in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican. Thematically, the *Possesso* replaced the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*. On the other hand, the *Donation of Constantine* departs from the

[296] The Salone dei Papi and the Salone di Costantino are the two poles of the piano nobile. Regardless of the order one starts with, he/she finishes with the other.
[297] Corrine Mandel has recognized that the Salone played an important role in the Lateran Palace but her comments are limited to the iconographic program. Corinne Mandel, *Sixtus V*), 156.
[298] The frescos of the Benediction Loggia were appraised by Tommaso Laureti and Giacomo Rocchetti in January 1589, whereas the ones in the Salone di Costantino were appraised by Gerolamo Muziano and Giacomo Rocchetti in May 1589. See Liliana Barroero, "Il Palazzo Lateranense," 217.
[299] The episode has been also called *Constantine Acting as a Strator or Pope Sylvester I.*

paradigmatic Romano-Penni representation of the subject. Massive columns conveniently divide the panel so that the most significant component of the subject is didactically presented in the central field. Pope Sylvester in prayer, seated on a high podium under a baldachin, looks on as Constantine deposes the document of the donation on an altar adorned with a crucifix and statues of St. Peter and St. Paul. On each side of the space inhabited by the pope, the emperor and their acolytes, common people, walled off by imperial guards, watch curiously and guide the viewer into the event. However, direct visual references to the text of the Donation surface in this cycle not only in the *Baptism* and the *Donation* but also in the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I*, an event founded exclusively upon the Donation legend.[300]

The two scenes that refer directly to the secular authority of the papacy, the *Donation of Constantine* and the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I*, had been represented sequentially in the thirteenth-century frescoes in the Chapel of St. Sylvester in the Monastery of SS. Quattro Coronati (fig. IV. 31), but in the Salone di Costantino they appear in the company of Old Testament figures meant to reinforce suggestively their historical authenticity by visual ecclesiology. The *Donation of Constantine* (fig. IV. 29) is flanked by full-size portraits of Moses and David, whereas the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* (fig. IV. 27) by those of Aaron and Solomon. The connection between religion and rulership, as well as between the laws of God administered through Moses and the document of Constantine, is clearly expressed in order to confer additional authority on the Donation of Constantine. Its visual representation is locked within an uncontestable Old Testament pair that obeyed the rule of God either in religious or secular form. Not

[300] For the *possesso*, see Chapter II.

only did Constantine and Sylvester parallel metaphorically the consecrated Old Testament figures, but also, by comparison, their common juridical actions in favor of the Church could be considered inscribable into cannon law, in other words, the law of God.

At the other end of the route, the five Constantine episodes displayed in the lunettes of the upper level of the Benediction Loggia of the Lateran recount the crucial moments of Constantine's relationship with Christianity and its saintly servants (fig. IV. 32).[301] Beginning with the *Vision of the Cross* and the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* compressed into one episode on the wall that connects the palace with the Loggia (fig. IV. 33), the cycle continues from left to right with: the *Dream and Recognition of SS. Peter and Paul* (fig. IV. 34), the *Donation of Constantine* (fig. IV. 35), the *Baptism of Constantine* (fig. IV. 36), and the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* (fig. IV. 37) .[302] Unlike the *Vision of the Cross* in the Salone di Costantino that clearly referred to the rendition of the episode in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, the one in the Loggia presents the action in a landscape. Constantine astride a horse, surrounded by his soldiers, experiences the vision in a manner that resembles the conversion of St. Paul.[303] The double scene of the *Dream and Recognition of SS. Peter and Paul* shows the context for Constantine's second conversion moment, or the pretext to the real conversion through baptism. In a vignette to the left, Saint Peter and Paul inform Constantine, who is asleep, about the only

[301] The artists involved in its decoration were most probably active on the sites of the Lateran Palace and the Scala Sancta: Prosperso Orsi, Paris Nogari, Ventura Salimbeni, Ferraù Fenzoni da Faenza, Baldassare Croce, Giambattista Pozzo, Giambattista Ricci, Giacomo Stella da Brescia, and Andrea Lilli. See, Rita Torchetti, "S. Giovanni in Laterano. Loggia delle Benedizioni," in *Roma di Sisto V*, 122-5.
[302] It is remarkable that *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge* was a marginal scene in the Sistine cycles devoted to Constantine.
[303] But the location of the scene, in the lunette above the door that provides access from the palace to the loggia, makes it difficult to be seen from the piazza in front of the Loggia. However, the fact that this is the single episode of the cycle that does not include Pope Sylvester may explain its location. Indeed, the other four lunettes frontally displayed in relation to the piazza focus on the story narrating the relationship between Sylvester and Constantine.

possible cure for his leprosy, to summon Pope Sylvester from his hideout outside Rome. To the right, Constantine receives the guarantee of his vision of the two apostles when confronted with an icon of their true likenesses. As this icon was preserved at the Lateran, the inclusion of this episode evidently helped to promote the Lateran relics. The *Donation of Constantine* alluded to the Lateran site, as its palace was granted by Constantine to the papacy as the first dwelling, but the fresco shows the emperor placing the document of the donation on an altar in the presence of Sylvester, clergy, guards, and lay people. The *Baptism of Constantine* captures Sylvester performing the sacrament of baptism for the emperor at the Lateran. Quoting the representation from the Sala di Costantino, the *Baptism* shows not the spot on which the Baptistery was subsequently built but the Baptistery itself. Finally, the *possesso* of Pope Sylvester, like any other papal *possesso*, had the Basilica Lateranense as its final destination. As we have seen, the *Posssesso* augmented the connotations of the Donation that Constantinian imagery could advance. A portrait of what I consider to be St. Sylvester (fig. IV. 38) interrupts the continuity of the last four Constantinian episodes exactly in the middle. Although the portrait is significant to the decorations its execution is too late in date to justify a discussion here.[304]

[304] The fresco of *St. Sylvester Blessing* from the Benediction Loggia at the Lateran may have been executed during the pontificate of Clement VIII. According to Domenico Fontana's engraving and description of the Loggia, initially there was a window where the fresco of *St. Sylvester Blessing* is now (see Domenico Fontana, *Dellla Trasportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano et delle Fabbriche di nostro signore Papa Sisto V* (Roma: Appresso Domenico Basa, 1590), 51). The window of the Sistine project was probably walled up when an organ was installed on the inner facade of the transept entrance during the renovation of the transept commissioned by Clement VIII for the Jubilee of 1600 (for more details on this subject, see the next section of this chapter). The fresco exhibits the Sistine coat-of-arms but the upper border of the door beneath the fresco bears the coat-of-arms of Clement VIII. This combination of the two coats-of-arms may seem confusing but, in fact, may indicate Clement VIII's policy of paying respect to his predecessor who made him a cardinal and facilitated his ascension on the ecclesiastical hierarchical scale. At the same time, Clement VIII opted for displaying an inscription celebrating exclusively Sixtus V on the interior of St. Peter's cupola even though Clement VIII was the one who finished the project (*S. Petri Gloriae Sixtus PP V ANNO 1590 Pontificatus V*); additionally, coats-of-arms (stars and lion's head) of Sixtus V are depicted on the spaces among the ribs of the cupola. Therefore, a similar intent may have motivated Clement VIII to

Nevertheless, it must be understood that even in the absence of the fresco with the portrait of St. Sylvester, a pontiff present in the Benediction Loggia while blessing the faithful would have been flanked by the most controversial Constantinian episodes, the *Baptism* and the *Donation*. Along with these two episodes, others of a more miraculous nature complete the characterization of the emperor's deeds.

Although the two *Donation* scenes at the Lateran are very similar, a few differences surface (fig. IV. 29a, 35). Even though the leaders of the team were the same, it is likely that the artists who executed the two scenes are different.[305] Compositionally, the location of the altar, and implicitly the location of Constantine, in relation to Sylvester changed from the same side as in the Loggia fresco to the opposite flank, as in the Salone di Costantino. In addition, the Loggia fresco shows a group of clerics holding liturgical objects that evidently refer to the Constantinian endowment of the Church. The preparatory drawing by Cesare Nebbia for the Loggia episode suggests that other details that appear now different in the fresco may have been very close initially (fig. IV. 39).[306] In it, one can see Constantine in a posture identical to the one seen in the Salone, with his body slightly tilted forward as if he were reading from his decree. Instead, the *Donation* in the Loggia shows Constantine looking at Sylvester as if seeking the pope's approval.

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attribute the fresco of *St. Sylvester Blessing* in the Benediction Loggia of the Lateran to the papacy of Sixtus V.

[305] The single contemporary testimony revealing a little about the artists involved in the Sistine project comes from Giovanni Baglione who in his youth participated to the decoration. Baglione attributes to both Prospero Orsi and Giacomo Stella a scene from the Constantinian cycle in the Benediction Loggia. Alessandro Zuccari identifies Giacomo Stella as the author of the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I* from the same cycle. Alessandro Zuccari, "Pittura come itinerario nella Roma sistina," in *Sisto V. I. Roma e il Lazio*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo e Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 641-658.

[306] The fortunate survival of this drawing allows investigating the working methods of this particular undertaking. The drawing seems to confirm the hypothesis that Nebbia was the exclusive intermediary who transposed visually the requirements of the pontiff, mainly represented by his advisers, and whose drawings were passed on to his fellow artists for execution.

Other details, that once looked similar, such as the embellishment of the altar, have now faded away in the Loggia fresco. In both *Donations*, the interpolation of the profane figures induces a sense of viewer participation. The scene of the Loggia seems more close-up as if the viewer is to step into the narrative to join the half-length figures at the bottom of the scene. This pictorial device was especially employed in the Loggia in order to invite people in the Piazza to communion with the Church. The *Donation* scenes preserve the three parties whose involvement in the act of donation increases the credibility of the historical occurrence: the donor, the donee, and the testifiers. An intermingling of Constantine's and Sixtus V's contemporaries constitutes the last of the categories mentioned above. The temporal stretch permitted Sixtus' contemporaries to project their consent regarding the newly validated document of the Donation onto the time when the document had originally been emitted. The dissimilarities between the two Donations emerge as minor, and certainly they do not affect the essential conceit of the subject: to highlight the veracity of the Constantinian donation by showing the emperor placing the very document on the Petrine altar.

None of the two Constantinian cycles follows a strict chronological order. The entrances to the Salone di Costantino would expose the viewer either to the *Possesso* or to the *Baptism* (fig. IV. 27, 28). Nevertheless, regardless of which of the four scenes the viewer decides to start with, a continuous chronology of the events is not possible. The ampler compositions of the *Possesso* and the *Donation* were accommodated on the longer walls of the room. The decoration of the entire frieze of the Salone does not present a repetitive motif all over but rather opposite walls have corresponding ornamental patterns. This sort of arrangement may invite a cross reading that would establish the

succession of events: first the smaller size episodes of the *Vision* and the *Baptism* followed by the larger *Possesso* and the *Donation*. Whether or not this was the case, for now I would suggest that the chronological disruption resulted from a change in the sequence of the episodes as exhibited in the visual source of the Salone, the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican. The two halls present similar layouts but the *Possesso of Pope Sylvester* replaced the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (fig. III. 9; IV. 40). Though absent, the latter appears embedded in the *Vision of the Cross*.[307] It is worth underlining that the reference to the earlier cycle by Romano and Penni remains in line with the process of revisiting the Constantinian imagery in the Sistine period. By favoring the scene of the *Possesso,* over *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge,* an attempt was made to draw attention to the most defining episodes of Constantine's life.

On the other hand, the Constantinian scenes of the Loggia unfold linearly in a chronological order, based on the combination of events described in the document of the Donation or the *Acta Sylvestri*, with only one exception. The *Donation of Constantine* and the *Baptism of Constantine* exchanged their positions within the sequence. If we are to suppose that the Constantinian chronology was not that known to the artists commissioned for the decoration of the Lateran, however, Sixtus V's advisers, who were in charge of supervising the works, were well versed in the Constantinian story. A more serious motive must have led to the inversion of the two episodes. Even though the mosaics of the ancient portico have disappeared, their recording in a seventeenth-century manuscript (*Barberini Latini* 4423) (fig. IV. 22, 23), as well as in engravings attached to Giovanni Ciampini's comments on the Lateran (*De Sacris Aedificiis a Constantino*

[307] In the Sala di Costantino, the Vision of the Cross was seen first by those entering through Sixtus' door.

Magno Constructis, 1693, fig. IV. 41), enable us to imagine the original decoration. In the Barberini manuscript, each episode occupies a folio, with the *Donation of Constantine* preceding the *Baptism of Constantine*. In the engraving of the medieval decoration of the portico found in Ciampini's text, the mosaic frieze is divided into four registers.[308] The second row from the top shows the two Constantinian episodes of the cycle, and as one can observe, the *Donation* comes before the *Baptism* when reading the images from left to right. The ancient mosaic of the portico contained only two Constantinian episodes, the sequential arrangement of which among the others did not create a problem. The contention here is that the order in which the two episodes appeared in the portico was intentionally transplanted into the Constantinian cycle of the Benediction Loggia despite the fact that it contradicted the chronology of that five-scene story. The medieval decoration was employed as a relic that certified the major controversial details of the Constantinian legend: the donation and the baptism.

That the mosaic had the status of historical proof is evident also in depicting, in the Sistine frescoes, the object of the Constantinian donation as a document. In spite of his reputation as a destroyer, Sixtus V was interested in the preservation of medieval features, along with their messages, of the Lateran. For such a motive, Fontana had to create the Levantine facade of the palace so as to permit the incorporation of the Scala Pontificale of the old Lateran Palace.[309] The twelfth-century mosaic captured the act of

[308] In his description of the old facade of the Basilica, Baglione (*Le Nove Chiese*, 1639) mentioned Christ but no other subject. However, he recorded "una cornice di marmo incrostata di misti e fatta di musaico all'antica, e sotto v'e inscrizioni di versi". Baglione, *Le Nove Chiese*, 135.
[309] See Alessandro Ipolitti, "L"architettura del Palazzo Lateranense", in *Il Palazzo Apostolico Lateranense*, ed. Carlo Pietrangeli (Rome: Nardini Editore, 1991) 193-199. Mario Manieri Elia has advanced the hypothesis that Sixtus V may have seen the Scalone as a monumetal metaphor of the Donation. See Mario Manieri Elia, "Riflessioni sul significato della Scala Pontificale laterana (e una nuova ipotesi sul significato

donation through Constantine handling the document, thus registering the donation to Pope Sylvester in front of what is believed to be the Lateran Basilica. The existence of the document would have guaranteed the veracity of Constantine's act juridically. The visual depiction of the document implied its existence. This cogent aspect of the representation of the object of donation became an integral part of the depictions of the Donation commissioned by Sixtus V. In both *Donations* at the Lateran, Constantine is about to place the document of the Donation, which he holds with both his hands, on the altar table of St. Peter's. A seal attached to the document in both *Donations* enriches the repertoire of proofs. These scenes situate the act of donation within the historical parameters indicated in the document by showing the right location, St. Peter's, and the culminating moment of the act, the placement of the document on the altar at the end of its public proclamation by Constantine. The text of the Donation specified that:

> Reinforcing the page of this our imperial decree [*vero imperialis decreti*] by our very own hands, we have placed it on the venerable body of the blessed Peter, first of the apostles. There pledging to that apostle of God to conserve all this things inviolate and to leave them under orders to our successor emperors to be conserved, we have handed them over to the most blessed Sylvester, our father, supreme pontiff, and universal Pope, and through him to all his successor pontiffs, with the assent of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to be possessed for ever and prosperously.[310]

The setting of the Donations in St. Peter's, Constantine's gesture of deposing the document at the saintly altar of St. Peter, and the invocation of a perpetual prayer to the

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degli obelischi sistini)," in *Sisto V. I. Roma e e il Lazio*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo e Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 429-438.

[310] "Huius vero imperialis decreti nostri paginam propriis manibus roborantes super venerandum corpus beati Petri, principis apostolorum, posuimus, ibique eifem dei apostolo spondentes, nos cuncta inviolabiliter conservare et nostris successoribus imperatoribus conservanda in mandatis relinqui, beatissimo patri nostro Silvestrio summo pontifici et universali papae eiusque per eum cunctis successoribus pontificibus, domino deo et salvatore nostro Iesu Christo annuente, tradidimus perenniter atque feliciter possidenda;" in"The Donation of Constantine." Valla, *On the Donation,* 183.

patron saint generated an atmosphere of confidence in the credibility of the document. The Romano-Penni version had situated the event in St Peter's but, according to that narrative, Constantine had deposited the object of donation in the hands of Pope Sylvester and not "on the venerable body of the blessed Peter." In the early modern period, the understanding of the object of donation as the document involved in the act of donation had been already expressed visually a few years before the Sistine undertakings. In ca. 1580, the supervisors of the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche had asked Cesare Nebbia, the same artist who worked for Sixtus V, to change his initial idea of showing the fresco of the *Donation Countess Matilda of Canossa* for the Galleria. While in the preparatory drawing the Countess hands over to the pope a map showing the territories included in her donation (fig. IV. 42), in the fresco she presents a document instead (fig. II. 18). Contrary to that, the sketch for the Donation in the Loggia shows that the artist considered the representation of the document from the very beginning either voluntarily as a consequence of his previous experience or obligatorily as an outcome of his contractual arrangements. While Nebbia's input may have been appreciated, the crucial details of the visual codification of the Donation episode must have remained within the strict theological sphere of Sixtus' advisers. Both the visual condensation of the object of Constantinian donation into a depiction of the document and the placement of the document on the altar of St. Peter were introduced as essential factors in the representation of the Donation. The medieval mosaic offered a documentable solution for clarifying the object of donation without the need of itemizing articles included in the document that would have been difficult to convey in one episode. By adopting it and correcting the setting of the act of donation, by precisely illustrating it at the altar as the

document specified, the *Donations* of the Sistine period advanced another visual explanation of Constantine's act of donation.

The capacity of the moment that marks the placement of the document to represent visually the essence of the act of donation made it rhetorically efficacious. According to the Donation document, the placement of the document is indeed the culminating moment, because all the particular donations had already been made: the Lateran Palace, the building and endowment of the five Basilicas, the tiara and the imperial accoutrements. Moreover, the *possesso* had taken place and Constantine was about to leave Rome for Constantinople. All the fundamental elements of the Constantinian donation had already been deployed. In addition, the mentioning of all these separate events in the Donation document avouched them retrospectively. That the two Donation frescoes at the Lateran illustrated not a certain individual donation, such as that of the Lateran, but the Donation of Constantine to the Church, is indicated by the Latin inscription accompanying the rendition of the subject in the Salone di Costantino.[311] The document of the Donation comprised the particular donations previously made by Constantine. Its physical visual description was employed to the effect of decreeing the true existence of the document. Copies of the text of the Donation document surface not infrequently in contemporary archival material, such as those in the Fondo Boncompagni discussed above, but fascinatingly a reproduction of the document, also equipped with a seal, dates from the pontificate of Sixtus V.[312] It seems that Sixtus V wanted to solidify the juridical validity of the document even after its recent official

[311] The inscription reads: FL. CONSTNATINUS MAX. IMP. AD PIETATEM TESTIFICANDAM ROMANAM ECCLESIAM DONIS AMPLISIMIS CUMULAT
[312] This document is preserved in the ASV.

approval with the *Decretum Gratiani*. The corporality of the document appeared as a warranty for the act of donation.

The feature of conscious repetition that strikes one who beholds the two *Donations* in parallel may suggest that the *Donations* followed prescribed rules. On the other hand, one may argue that the two were frescoed if not by the same artist at least by artists who belonged to the same team and transposed Nebbia's design, which would imply a formulaic usage of the composition. Considering the speed reputedly required of artists by Sixtus V, this hypothesis is credible. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that, unlike the versions of the *Vision of the Cross* or the *Baptism* in the Lateran complex, the two *Donation* compositions found in the same place interacted with but did not subscribe blindly to previous renditions of the subject. In addition, as noted above, a certain degree of variation exists between the two versions. What remains stable regards the constitutive elements of the new visual explanation of the Donation of Constantine: the document and its placement on the altar. The repetition is due to the necessity to enforce a norm upon the new visual representation of the Donation, in order to establish it as the most accurate and desirable. Such an interpretation is given by Domencio Fontana, the executor of Sixtus V's ambitious plans. Despite what seems to have been an awfully busy schedule, Domenico Fontana endeavored to assure posterity to his projects by composing a text entitled primarily after his most audacious undertaking, the installment of the obelisk in the Vatican Piazza (*Dellla Trasportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano et delle Fabbriche di nostro signore Papa Sisto V,* 1590). In the succinct description of the frescoes adorning the Lateran Palace, the reader finds the *Donation of Constantine* characterized either as " the privilege that he conferred upon the Church" ("il privilegio,

che egli diede alla Santa Chiesa") when the author enumerates the scenes of the Constantinian cycle in the Benediction Loggia, or "numerous gifts to the Church" ("amplissimi doni alla Chiesa Romana") when presenting the frescoes in the Salone di Costantino.[313] Apparently, common knowledge exempted the author from explaining to what the *privilegio* or *dono(i)* referred. However, the author, who had the past representations of the Donation theme present in mind, felt obliged to recommend the proper way to depict the episode:

> [Constantine's] act of donation has to be represented in painting in this way: the emperor in imperial garb with a document in hand is about to place the document over the altar table in the presence of Pope St. Sylvester and of Cardinals.[314]

Although the author only alluded to the location of the act, he very well captured the prescriptive nature of depictions of the object of donation that established the document as the object of donation. There is something urgent and imposing in Fontana's language that implies a decreeing of the truth about how to represent the episode. The telegraphic language of the description reminds one not only of Paleotti's or of Armerini's decrees on sacred painting but also of manuals on painting icons in the Eastern Orthodox tradition such as of Dionysius of Fourna that enclosed the visual representations of sacred subjects within prototypes. Most notably, Fontana used such a language uniquely in his description of the *Donation of Constantine*. Fontana was omnipresent at the Sistine sites and was exposed to the discussions concerning the project. He had good knowledge of what was to be depicted and how. His keen servitude to Sixtus gave him immense satisfaction during the short Sistine pontificate but slowed the subsequent evolution of his

[313] Domenico Fontana, *Dellla Trasportatione*, 57, 63v.
[314] "il qual atto si rapresenta in pittura in questo modo, cioè L'Imperatore in habito imperiale con una carta in mano, quale egli stesso presenta sopra l'altare alla presentia di San Silvestro Papa, e de'Cardinali." Fontana, Ibid., 63v.

career. He was a Sistine creation who transmitted the pope's various concepts. Such was the case with the depiction of the Donation. Fontana's words purport that Sixtus V charged the Nebbia-Guerra team with the depiction of a definitive explanation of the Donation which had to display the document as the object of donation. The pontiff's will, often so pregnant, was mediated by his advisers but his vision of a particular Constantinian revival generated the search for a new visual representation of the Donation.

The political connotations of the Donation dictated Sistine politics from the beginning of the pontificate and impelled the pontiff to initiate his reconstructive program with the Constantinian site of the Lateran. Although the Lateran Palace remained a crucial destination for certain papal rites and feasts of the religious calendar, the subsequent usage of the palace was not that intended by Sixtus V but for some sporadic exceptions. Paul V's decision to transfer the administration of the palace to the Lateran canons in 1618 led to a relapse into forgetting of the palace.[315] Nevertheless, later restorations did not bring major modifications to the Sistine structure. The mural decoration that embellishes this Constantinian site attests to the Sistine policy on the source of the papal power. Only a few years away from the confirmation of the Donation of Constantine through the *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582, and from the celebration of the event with a visual explanation of the document in the frescoes commissioned by Gregory XIII in the Sala di Costantino, Sixtus V reinforced the veracity of the Donation by commissioning the episode thrice. Sixtus' dedication to the defense of the Donation, as

[315] Paul V was mainly invested in the Quirinal Palace. For more details on the subsequent functions of the palace, see Alessandro Ipolitti, "L"architettura del Palazzo Lateranense,"193-199.

well as the Christian values promoted by Constantine, stemmed from his desire to own the Constantinian era. This political gesture was made manifest in the pontiff's effort to appropriate the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican and to advance another visual explanation for the Donation. According to the new prescribed code, the material document became the object of donation.

The Ambiguity of the Object of Donation during the Pontificate of Clement VIII

The confirmation of the Donation of Constantine through the revised *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582 was meant to conclude the controversy on the long-disputed issue. However, as during the pontificate of Gregory XIII when the promulgation of the *Decretum* occurred, a faction of the Curia opposed it even after its official recognition as a rightful article in the corpus of canon law. Amongst the opposing voices, Roberto Bellarmino and Cesare Baronius had become the most memorable. With regard to Constantine's deeds, Baronius discredited the Donation document as fabricated but emphasized the numerous gifts offered by Constantine to ecclesiastical establishments, and especially to the churches he founded.[316] On the other hand, Bellarmino stated that there was no need of human empowerment of the papacy through Constantine because terrestrial power was subservient to and derivative from the divine.[317] As pointed out in the previous section, only the death of Sixtus V exempted Bellarmino from drastic repercussions for his views on the origins of the papal temporal power. Both Bellarmino

[316] Baronius, *Annales*, III, 231a-232e; 244b.
[317] Similarly, as Giovanni Maria Vian has already pointed out, Baronius' act of denying the donation implied the renunciation to establishing the source of the papacy into a human, Constantine, and redirecting it to the divine instead. See, Vian, *La donazione*, 169-173.

and Baronius assumed important institutional roles during the first durable pontificate after Sixtus V, namely the pontificate of Clement VIII (1592-1605). Both received the cardinal's hat from Clement VIII. Moreover, Baronius, in his role as confessor of Clement VIII, had a special relationship with the pontiff. Baronius' arguments in the controversy around the Donation must have poured into the pope's ears. On the other hand, the Donation, as part of the Post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani*, represented a given that Clement VIII could not ignore. This section analyzes the impact on the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine of the tension between an official law accrediting the Donation and the views of highly appreciated clergymen who rejected its historical grounds. The question that emerges here is whether Clement VIII was ready to adopt literally one of the Post-Tridentine visual explanations of the theme or to establish a new interpretation that would contest the tradition. This question will be addressed and answered through a Constantinian fresco cycle commissioned by the pontiff for the transept of the Lateran Basilica, and especially through one episode—executed by the Roman artist Giovanni Baglione—that depicts Constantine in the act of donating to the Lateran Basilica (fig. IV. 54).

Although Clement VIII enjoyed a thirteen-year long pontificate during which many projects could have materialized, he had a limited policy towards artistic commissions, focusing primarily on religious art related to the celebration of the Jubilee of 1600. In comparison with the recent extensive Sistine interventions in the city of Rome, the Clementine period must have seemed insignificant in terms of public works even to contemporary supporters of the pope. Baglione, who received an important commission from the pontiff, found excuses for the scarcity of Clementine artistic

projects in the pontiff's preoccupation with the tormented foreign political situation, especially the Turkish threat and Franco-Spanish tension, and with piety.[318] Despite the fact that during his reign Rome became the stage of notable artistic innovations at the hands of the Carracci and Caravaggio, Clement VIII never showed interest in exploiting the new artistic developments for the glorification of the papacy. Instead, the pontiff relied considerably on artists who had worked for his predecessor Sixtus V. Clement must have had a good insight on how Sixtus V had operated. He had been in Sixtus V's good graces from the beginning of the latter's pontificate, when Ippolito Aldobrandini had become first a cardinal and subsequently an apostolic legate *ad latere*.[319] Thus, it comes as no surprise that Clement VIII's pontificate debuted under the effort to complete the unfinished projects of Sixtus V.[320] At the same time, Clement VIII considered it opportune to complement the Sistine projects. So it was the case with the renovation of the transept of the Lateran Basilica, a project which was initiated in the summer of 1592 only a few months after his election (fig. IV. 44).[321] As discussed in the previous section, the medieval structure had undergone restorations most recently under Sixtus V at the exterior of the transept entrance (fig. IV. 32). Clement VIII entrusted Giacomo della Porta, the current architect of St. Peter's, with an architectural intervention meant to

[318] Baglione, *Le vite*, 58.
[319] Ippolito Aldobrandini was the second in line to be nominated a cardinal by Sixtus V. At the beginnings of his career, Ippolito had been favored by Pius V. His career had stagnated during the pontificate of Gregory XIII during which he had retained the same position he had reached during the reign Pius V, auditor of the Rota (see Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 23, 5-42). Ippolito's marginal status at the court of Gregory XIII may have led to favorite status at the court of Sixtus V.
[320] "N.S.re ha dato parola che si finischino tutte le fabriche incominciate da Sisto V. tra le quali si finisce hora il ponte del Borghetto et altre certe strutture". *Avisso*, Feb. 12, 1592, Urb. 1060, I, BAV (quoted in Pator, XXIV, 468, n.1).
[321] As part of the obligatory visitation of the churches introduced with the Council of Trent, Clement VIII visited the Lateran Basilica on June 18th, 1592 and made several comments for the improvement of tabernacles and reliquaries. *Avviso*, June 27, 1592, Urb.1062, I, BAV.

modify the transept into a nave-like structure with its focal point on the Altar of the Holy Sacrament.[322] Simultaneously, a pictorial cycle was devised for this new space and commissioned from a group of artists under the guidance of Giuseppe Cesari, better known as Cavalier d'Arpino (fig. IV. 44-46).[323] Due to its massive transformation, the transept became known as the *Nave Clementina*. This project resulted in what would be the greatest public intervention for the Jubilee.

The decoration of the transept directly reflects one of the principal names of the Lateran Basilica: the Constantiniana. Although Constantine had founded several basilicas in Rome, only the Lateran Basilica was the Constantiana and *Mater et Caput* of all other churches.[324] The choice of a decoration program comprising Constantinian legends could not be more appropriate for the *Nave Clementina* (fig. IV. 47-54). The pontiff confided in his close collaborator Cesare Baronius about a theme for the decoration of the nave.[325] Baglione refers to the main cycle as episodes from the life of the emperor Constantine the Great ("storie dell"Imperadore Costantino il Grande"), but, as Jack Freiberg has already suggested, the cycle celebrates St. Sylvester and the Lateran Basilica as well.[326] The whole fresco cycle covers two different registers of the transept walls. Eight episodes involving Constantine, Pope Sylvester I, and the Basilica Constantiniana, are topped by a

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[322] For the restoration of the transept, see Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600*, 37-64. The pope was not very happy with the result because the location of the Altar of the Holy Sacrament at the south end of the transept made its viewing impossible to those entering the church through the main entrance (*Avviso*, January 6, 1599, Urb. 1067, BAV quoted in Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 24, 478).
[323] According to Baglione, the pontiff used his own money for this commission. Baglione, *Le vite*, 60.
[324] For the other dedications and names of the Basilica, see Chapter II.
[325] Baronius acted as an artistic advisor to the pope. See Alessandro Zuccari, "La politica culturale dell'Oratorio romano nela seconda metà del Cinquecento," in *Storia dell'arte*, 41 (1981), 77-112; Alessandro Zuccari, "La politica culturale dell'Oratorio romano nelle imprese artistiche promosse da Cesare Baronio," in *Storia dell'arte*, 42 (1981), 171-193; Stefania Macioce, *Undique splendent: aspetti della pittura sacra nella Roma di Clemente VIII Aldobrandini (1592-1605)* (Rome: De Luca edizioni d'arte, 1990), 12-26.
[326] Baglione, *Le vite*, 60; Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600*, 81-129.

series of Apostles and Holy Fathers, whereas a *Resurrection of Christ*, frescoed by the leader of the team himself, occupies the wall section above the Altar of the Holy Sacrament. As in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, the employment of the device of feigned tapestries for the Constantine episodes confers upon the frescoes a state of richness that resonates with the imperial status of the main protagonist of the narrative. Patterns embellished with the Aldobrandini coat-of-arms decorate the margins of the fictional tapestries. Abundant ornaments, amongst which tapestries figured prominently, adorned the Lateran Basilica on certain feasts of the liturgical and papal calendar.[327] The Clementine decoration succeeds in preserving the festive state continuously, and the extensive usage of gold pigment reminds visitors, without any doubt, of the appellative that the Basilica received due to its lavish decoration in the very time of Constantine, *Aurea*. The Constantine stories unfold around the transept counter-clockwise, starting from the left of the Altar of the Holy Sacrament: the *Triumph of Constantine* (Bernardino Cesari), *Constantine's Dream of SS. Peter and Paul* (Cesare Nebbia), *Pope Sylvester on Mount Sorrate* (Paris Nogari), the *Baptism of Constantine* (Cristoforo Roncalli), the *Foundation of the Lateran Basilica* (Paris Nogari), the *Consecration of the High Altar of the Lateran Basilica* (Giovanni Battista Ricci), the *Apparition of Christ at the Lateran* (Paris Nogari), and *Constantine's Donation to the Lateran Basilica* (Giovanni Baglione) (figs. IV. 47-54).[328] While the entire cycle sets the context, the last scene of the cycle presents maximum relevance for the donation theme.

[327] See for instance the contemporary descriptions of the *possesso* ceremonies.
[328] Baglione's *Vite* is the main source for these attributions. Unlike Domenico Fontana who was marginalized from the court of Clement VIII, the painters involved in the *Nave Clementina* had worked for Sixtus V with the exception of Bernardino Cesari and Cristoforo Roncalli. The choice for such a team may have been determined by the artists' acquaintance with the requirements of a docile behavior and with pious art depicted in the Sistine undertakings.

Two ongoing parallel actions generated by the same motif take place in Baglione's fresco of *Constantine's Donation to the Lateran Basilica* (figs. IV. 54; 55 a, b). In the middle-ground, the emperor on his knees pays respect to Pope Sylvester on the landing above a flight of stairs in front of the Lateran Basilica. Soldiers and attendants carry several liturgical gifts offered by the emperor to the Basilica and entrusted to its high priest Sylvester. Owing to its location in the center of the pictorial field, the silver statue of Christ, one of the most precious gifts, arrests the viewer's attention. At the same time, this statue of Christ, along with the image of Pope Sylvester holding a processional cross, acts as an accolade for the figure of the humble emperor. Constantine appears visually enclosed within a circle of holiness that vouches for his piety. The curious crowd who usually witnesses the encounter between the emperor and the spiritual leader of Rome in a *Donation* scene has been reduced here to a mere suggestion. In the foreground, Constantine's servants deliver and guard the numerous exquisite gifts with which Constantine had decided to endow the Basilica. The various golden vessels on display on the table, the large silver vases, and the silver Christ demonstrate what Constantine donated on this occasion. Considering this aspect of the event first, the fresco does not appear to politicize Constantine but to present the emperor as a munificent donor of the Church. In addition, neither the emperor nor the pope attends the meeting wearing his crown of office. The particularities of this episode concord with Baglione's description of the fresco as a depiction of Constantine in the act of offering gifts to the Lateran Basilica in both of his books, *Le nove chiese di Roma* (1639) and *Le vite* (1642).[329]

[329] In *Le Nove Chiese*, Baglione noted: "quando il Gran Costantino donò molti vasi d'oro, e d'argento alla Basilica Lateranense, e consegnolli a S. Silvestro Papa" (Baglione, *Le nove chiese*, 122). In his own life of the *Vite*: "Con l'occorenza dell'Anno Santo 1600 fece di sua mano nella Basilica di s. Gio. su'l muro della

The various titles that the fresco has received since its execution stress that the scene depicts *Constantine's Donation to the Lateran* rather than the *Donation of Constantine*.[330] Not only Baglione's verbal clarification but also its subsequent quotation in artistic guides to the city of Rome, such as Fillipo Titi's, led to the diffusion of this message.[331] Modern scholars have also noted that the scene shows the Donation to the Lateran and not the problematic Donation of Constantine, and they have, in addition, attributed the decision to depict this episode to Cesare Baronius, whose opinion on the spuriousness of the Donation was known by the time of the execution of the frescoes, thanks to the third volume of the *Annales* published in 1592.[332] In relation to the representations of the Donation from the Sistine period, this identification of the Lateran fresco may seem to be a corrective. While I agree with this identification of the subject of the fresco, with the idea of Baronius' involvement, and with the idea of the fresco as a reflection of Baronius' opinions, I question the power of the *Donation to the Lateran* to challenge the Donation tradition. For advocates of the Donation, the "Donation to the

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Crociata presso l'Altar del Santissimo Sagramento, quando Costantino Imperadore, donando molti vasi d'oro, e d'argento a quella Chiesa, al Pontefice s. Salvestro consegnolli." (Baglione, *Le vite*, 401).

[330] The various titles are: Stefania Macioce: *I doni di Costantino* (Stefania Macioce, *Giovanni Baglione (1566-1644): pittore e biografo di artisti* (Rome: Lithos, 2002), XVIII). In the exhibition catalogue *The Genius of Rome*: *The Emperor Constantine Invests the Lateran with Treasure* (Beverly Louise Brown, *The Genius of Rome, 1592-1623* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2001), 372). Maryvelma Smith O' Neil calls it once the *Gifts of Constantine* and another time, probably in agreement with the editors of the above-mentioned exhibition catalogue, *The Emperor Constantine Invests the Lateran with Treasure* (Maryvelma Smith O' Neil, *Giovanni Baglione: Artistic Reputation in Baroque Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16, 86.

[331] "Costantino, che dona li vasi d'oro, e d'argento alla Basilica." Filippo Titi. *Stvdio Di Pittvra, Scoltvra, Et Architettvra, Nelle Chiese Di Roma* (Roma: Per il Mancini, 1674).

[332] Milles L. Chappell and W. Chandler Kirwin, "A Petrine Triumph: the Decoration of the Nave Piccole in San Pietro under Clement VIII," *Storia dell'arte* 21 (1974): 119-170; Luigi Spezzaferro has approached the issue in general terms without referring to a specific text, Luigi Spezzaferro, "Il recupero del Rinascimento,", 192; Jack Freiberg, Stefania Macioce, and Maryvelma Smith O'Neil mention the third volume of the *Annales.* Smith O'Neil has remarked that Baronius mentioned Valla's critique, but no such mention is to be found in Baronius' comments upon the Donation. See Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600,* 234, n.126; Stefania Macioce, 2002, XVIII; Maryvelma Smith O' Neil, 86.

Lateran" could not equal the Donation of Constantine, since it was a particular donation folded into the general juridical donation. A visual representation such as that prescribed under Sixtus V implied the existence of the other particular donations made by Constantine prior to the event registered as the Donation of Constantine. I simply ask whether the particular stands for the general, whether the species stands for the genus and wish to propose a more nuanced reading of the fresco in a larger context that pays attention not only to the program advisor but also to the commissioner, the pontiff himself. At the same time, Baglione's known preparatory drawings for the episode show different phases towards transforming the narrative into an unequivocal depiction of the *Donation to the Lateran* (fig. IV. 56-7). Regardless of how much the *Donation to the Lateran* may have been designed to resist a political reading, it was impossible for any knowledgeable person not to relate it to the existing Donation scenes. Even if the episode mirrored Baronius' thoughts, and despite Baronius' great influence on the pope, the argument here is that the *Donation to the Lateran* did not disturb the official stance of the Church with regard the Donation of Constantine. To affirm this conclusion, it will be helpful to look at the attitudes towards the controversial Donation held by those who commissioned and designed the episode under scrutiny. Will we start with the pontiff, Clement VIII, then shift towards the person in charge of doctrinal guidance, Baronius, and conclude with Baglione's *Donation to the Lateran*.

Clement VIII's Views on Papal Authority, and on the Donation of Constantine

Owing not only to his training as a jurist but also to his membership in the Curia

and later role as the head of the Church, Ippolito Alobrandini was familiar with the debate on the Donation of Constantine. As a favorite of Sixtus V, and as a diplomatic envoy of the same pontiff, Cardinal Aldobrandini was evidently well informed about Sixtus' fervid approval of the Donation as a political tool. On the other hand, although Clement VIII owned the launch of his high-flying ecclesiastical career to Sixtus V, his attention to a close collaborator like Cesare Baronius offered the pontiff plenty of opportunities to develop a position on the Donation of Constantine different from that of Sixtus V.

Although his pontificate is considered by historians as a shift away from Sisitine policies, Clement VIII endeavored to reinforce papal power as well.[333] The Turkish threat, the absolution of Henry IV of Navarra, the peace between France and Spain, and the regaining of Ferrara for the papacy marked the politics of Clement's pontificate. With regard to the welfare of the Church, Clement VIII, like his predecessors Gregory XIII and Sixtus V, committed himself to reform. In some cases, he considered necessary the amendment of certain decisions implemented by his predecessors, such as the re-organization of the Curia undertaken by Sixtus V. The revision of liturgical books launched by Clement VIII focused on already Post-Tridentine collections. The Breviary had been published by Pius V in 1568 but the new corrected edition came out in 1602. *Pontificale Romanum*, whose revision had been ordered by Sixtus V, was published in 1596.[334] Early in his pontificate, the pope proposed the continuation of the revision of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, and participated himself in the process. However, this undertaking meant not the review of the already-corrected *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582 but

[333] See Luigi Spezzaferro, "Il recupero del Rinascimento," 183-274 (especially, 185-200).
[334] The pope forbade the use of all other editions of the *Pontificale* currently in use. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 24, 227; *Pontificale Romanum, Editio Princeps, 1595-6*, eds. Manilo Sodi and Achile Maria Triaca (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Città del Vaticano, 1997, XV).

the codification of decretals and constitutions of the Councils that were not traditionally included in the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Although the work, *SDND Clementis Papae VIII*, was approved by the commission in 1593 and was ready for the press in July 1598, in the end it was not published.[335] While the pontiff offered no explanation as to why he put the project aside, he did so prudently.

Indeed, in whatever action Clement VIII undertook, he proved prudent. Even Baglione in his brief characterization of the pontiff's personality registered this quality.[336] The political importance of the virtue of prudence, as well as its relationship to dissimulation, has been discussed earlier in this dissertation. It appears that unlike Gregory XIII, who placed his pontificate under the tutelage of Prudence, Clement VIII cultivated a reputation for prudence so as to portray himself as an embodiment of peace. It was especially the peace between two major monarchical powers, Spain and France, that gave the impetus to his public characterization as a peacemaker.[337] For advocates of the Donation, the function of the pontiff as a peacemaker was a corollary of the Donation.[338] A portrait of the pontiff, recently attributed to Clement's favorite painter Cesare d'Arpino, conveys Clement's propensity for piety and peace (fig. IV. 59).[339] A skull and a dove form a lectern, practically a support, for the pontifical documents. Peace meant quietness, the reconciliation of opposed opinions. It was especially this aspect of embracing and mediating peace that appealed to the pontiff. The methods adopted by

[335] Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 24, 230.
[336] "Clemente VIII Fiorentino della nobile Famiglia Aldobrandina fu prudentissimo, e sapientissimo Pontefice, amatore di queste virtù." Baglione, *Le vite*, 58. It is interesting to note how many times Pastor used the word prudence in connection with Clement VIII.
[337] For the celebratory medal of this event, see Modesti, *Corpus numismatum*, vol. 4, 2004, 348.
[338] See Gherardo Bosselli's argument in Chapter VI.
[339] For this attribution and also an interpretation through a summary of Clement's pontificate, see Eugenio Lo Sardo, Michele Di Sivo, and Orietta Verdi, *Caravaggio a Roma: una vita dal vero* (Rome: De Luca, 2011), 185-187.

Clement VIII in dealing with the delicate issues developing during his pontificate show that he prudently pondered, inclined towards reconciliation, or avoided taking a decision if the discrepancies between the parties involved were too severe. He pondered considerably the absolution of Henry of Navarra, taking into account both those who favored the act and those who accused the French king of Nicodemism (religious dissimulation).[340] While he ended up absolving Henry, he did not intervene in the vivid theological debate between Dominicans and Jesuits on the issue of grace. Remarkably, he withdrew from the trial of Giordano Bruno that resulted in the burning at stake of the accused in the Jubilee year of 1600. His decisions sketch a portrait of a man who wanted to seem firm but not sullied, a man associated with peace.

The same prudent attitude toward peace must have coordinated Clement's ambiguous position on the Donation of Constantine. The elimination of the entries on the coronation of the pope and the *possesso* from the revised *Pontificale Romanum* of Clement VIII (1596) may account for a protest against the associations between these ceremonies and the empowerment of the papacy according to the Donation.[341] Moreover, Clement did not encourage the visual and textual preservation of his *possesso* as his immediate predecessors Sixtus V and Gregory XIV had done. However, the account of Clement's *possesso* relates unorthodox practices undertaken by the pontiff. While he submitted to the major steps of the ceremony, he preferred to keep his tiara when, according to the custom, he had to change it for the bishop's headgear. One may think that the *Pontificale* reflects a sense of inclusiveness that retroactively approved Clement's

[340] For the king's dissimulation see: *Se Navarra facendosi Catolico debbe esser dal Papa ribenedetto, et acettato per re di Francia*, Segreteria di Stato, 265, fol.371-380, ASV.
[341] For my reading of the *possesso*, see Chapter II.

comportment on his own *possesso*, but not only the coronation and *possesso* entries disappeared from the Clementine edition. Rather, an aspiration for succinctness may have determined the commission for the revision of the *Pontificale* to omit such entries. In the end, both papal ceremonies were a Roman affair and information on their ritualistic application did not need to circulate throughout the Catholic world. Whatever the case was, Clement VIII's attitude during his own *possesso* indicates his interest in the performance of power.

At the same time, Clement's natural propensity for piety directed him toward the spiritual guidance of the Oratorians, whose top scholar Baronius publicly formulated concerns about the validity of the Donation since the beginning of Clement's pontificate in 1592.[342] It is well known that the first two leaders of the Oratorians, Filippo Neri and Cesare Baronius, exercised great influence on Ippolito. Despite his profound admiration for the Oratorians, the pope postponed the process of canonization for Filippo Neri after a fast first audition right after the death of the popular figure he adored.[343] Clement's canonization policy was very limited in general, and it was most plausibly so because of his caution pondering of the consequences of his actions. For some, the pope's attachment to the Oratorians would imply, and so it has been hitherto assumed, that the pontiff adopted unconditionally Baronius' opinion on the Donation of Constantine. Without a doubt, Clement consulted often with Baronius and listened carefully to him in difficult

[342] According to primary sources, it seems that Aldobrandini's pious behavior recommended him for his ascension to the high ranks of the Curia. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 23, 22-47. Despite the image of a pious man, Clement was accused of excessive nepotism, especially toward Pietro Aldobrandini.
[343] See Miguel Gotor, *Chiesa e santità nell'Italia moderna* (Rome: GLF Editori Laterza, 2004), 42-52. The pope also sanctioned some popular cultic practices linked to Filippo Neri and cultivated by the Oratorians without the apostolic approval. See Ruth S. Noyes, "On the Fringes of Center: Disputed Hagiographic Imagery and the Crisis over the *Beati moderni* in Rome ca. 1600," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, No. 3 (Fall 2011): 800-846.

moments as when he was tormented by doubt regarding the absolution of Henry IV of Navarra.[344] Nevertheless, regardless of how persuasively Baronius could have argued in general, not only his word mattered to Clement VIII. The process of revising the Breviary offers a very edifying case. Not all the corrections suggested by Baronius and Bellarmino—the two champions of the abandonment of the Donation by the papacy—for the Breviary reached unanimity within in the commission invested with the revision, and consequently Clement did not approve them.[345] His listening to all parties, as well his decisions taken based on a majority vote, indicates that he meant a peaceful agreement among parties. Had the pontiff publicly agreed on the speciousness of the Donation, Baronius would have not needed to warn him to adopt a prudent approach to the problem in a letter composed in 1594, two years after the third volume of the *Annales*.[346] Besides those who supported Baronius' and Bellarmino's theses, there was another faction of the Curia that relied on the *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582, and thus considered the Donation valid.[347] The pope was the mediator between the parties furthering antagonistic perspectives on the Donation, and as we have seen, he never precipitated in dictating a final solution.

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[344] Baronius wrote a memorial to the pope. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 23, 118 (with details on early modern bibliography); Cyriac K Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius, Counter-Reformation Historian* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 52-3.

[345] The commission was formed by Baronius, Bellarmino, Silvio Antoniano, Lodovico de Torres, Bartolomeo Gavanti, Michele Ghislieri, and Giovanni Battista Bandini. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol.24, 228.

[346] For the letter, see Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600*, 234 n.128.

[347] An exceptional contemporary solution was put forward by Alphonsius Ciaconius who considered that Constantine had made the donation but Pope Sylvester had not accept it. See Ciaconius, "Anno eodem 1595. die Iunij 12 Arceipiscopus Michael Mitropolita Kioviensis, Hulieciensis, & tottius Russiae, & Episcopi secptem Ruthenorum Graecum ritum sectantes, Concordia cum Latina Ecclesia Apostolica Romana… Die 23 Novembris, in vaticani Constantini Aula Pontificis in throno sedetis, & Cardinalum corona stipati pede Rutheni Legati venerabundi". Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Vitae et Gesta Summorum Pontificum a Christo Domino Usque ad Clement VIII necnon SRE Cardinalium cum eorundem insignibus. M. Alfonsi Ciaconi Biacensis Ordinis Predicatorum, & Poenitentiarrj* (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1630), I, 32-35.

On the other hand, the pontiff had to consider the implications of the Donation seriously, especially the right to territorial control claimed through both documents and physical possession. References to donations did exist during Clement's pontificate. The catalogue of documents in the possession of the newly-founded Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro captioned imperial *privilegia*.[348] The chronological enumeration starts with the privilege conferred by Charlemagne, which implies the absence of the Donation of Constantine. Even without the Donation, post-Constantine donations could supplement particular claims. The issue of territorial control alimented the pope's eagerness to devolve Ferrara to the Papal States once with the extinction of a legitimate d'Este heir. At his lavish entry into Ferrara on 8 May 1598, the pope wore a tiara supposedly worth the astronomical sum of half a million scudi.[349] Although Baronius could claim that the papal temporal power originated in the spiritual, the tiara had a too pregnant terrestrial connotation not to be interpreted as a symbol of power. Equally, the action of annexing Ferrara resonated profoundly with the donation phenomenon. Whatever his personal position on the matter of the Donation, Clement VIII did not take any official measure to disapprove the Donation. Valla remained on the list in the two editions of the *Index Prohibitorum* issued during his pontificate (1596, 1599). [350] Valla's text evidently did more than denigrate the document of the donation, and one may argue that other issues he

[348] Clemente VIII P.M. Evangelista Palotto Cardinale Cusentio Archipbro Index Omnium Scripturarus Archivij sacrosanta Basilica Principis Apstolor. Issu Capituli Procurante admodus Itt.ri a R.mo D. Silvio Antoniano canonico, et Bibliothecaro confectus atq conscript. Anno Domini MDXCIIII. Sala.cons. mss. 401. rosso, BAV.

[349] For more details on the entry see Michel Bonner, "A Papal Progress in 1598," in *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Susan S. Munshower, 1 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 111-135; Karen Meyer-Roux, "The Entry of Clement VIII into Ferrara: Donato Rasciotti's Triumph," in *Getty Research Journal* 3, 2011, 169-178. His entry into Ferrara had been predated by that of his nephew Pietro Aldobrandini as the apostolic legate in January 1598.

[350] Vian states that Valla's *De falso credita* was taken out from the 1596 edition, but my study of several copies of this edition has shown that Valla's treatise remained on the list. Vian, *La donazione*, 151.

addressed earned him a stable place on the list. The Donation did not enter into the reformatory views of Clement, although he asked for revisions of the Breviary and *Pontificale Romanum*, both of which had already enjoyed a Post-Tridentine edition. Canon law interested the pope deeply, however not for amending the *Decretum Gratiani* to which the Donation of Constantine belonged but for enlarging its corpus with interpretations of the Tridentine decrees. Even if he would have adhered to Baronius' opinion, officially, Clement did not defy the Curia, and the *Decretum Gratiani*, on the Donation. Clement VIII possessed the political savvy to navigate ambiguously the issue of the Donation. Ambiguity, which can be understood as an exteriorized feature of dissimulation, maintained both peace and objectionable claims.

Clement VIII and Constantinian Imagery

The disputes over the Donation sheds light on how Constantinian imagery and sites appeared in commissions of the pope and his collaborators. Before any of his projects reached completion, Clement could exploit Constantinian imagery already at his disposal. When meeting with the representatives of Ruthenians in 1595 for discussing the union of the latter with Rome, Clement shrewdly chose the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican as the venue.[351] Notably, the first personal undertaking the pontiff launched was the construction of the transept of the Lateran shortly after his election in 1592. Besides preparing the transept of the Basilica for the Jubilee, the pontiff commissioned the renovation of the two lateral chapels of the Constantinian Baptistery (fig. II. 3), the ones

[351] Ciaconius, " Anno eodem 1595", III, 1861 E. The section is an addition by Andrea Victorelli, one of the authors who continued Ciaconius' monumental work.

dedicated to St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist. When one considers that the latter was believed to be Constantine's room in the old palace, one realizes that not only maintenance reasons urged Clement to initiate the restoration. [352] The efforts to restore ecclesiastical establishments for the Jubilee involved a series of churches, and amongst them, interestingly, were both of the Roman churches dedicated to St. Sylvester.[353] The older of the two, the Church of San Silvestro in Capite hosted famous relics such as the *Volo Santo*.[354] On the other hand, the Church of the San Silvestro al Quirinale, although it lacked a thesaurus of famous relics, interacted with the papal court as it served occasionally as a palace church for the papal residence at the Quirinal. While the decoration of the San Silvestro in Capite would be expanded with Constantinian episodes only after the death of Clement VIII (fig. II. 19), the first vault of the tribune of the Church of San Silvestro al Quirinale received a fresco that celebrates the patron saint of the church for the Jubilee (fig. IV. 60-61). [355] This fresco decoration at San Silvestro al

[352] The chapels were evocatively consecrated on Clement's election day. For Constantine's room, see Chapter II. The gild columns of the Altar of the Sacrament were believed to have come from the Holy Land and incorporated subsequently by Constantine into the Basilica.

[353] St. Sylvester was also the patron saint of Clement's father, Silvestro Aldobrandini. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Morton C. Abromson, "Clement VIII's Patronage of the Brothers Alberti," *Art Bulletin* 60, No. 3 (Sep., 1978): 539.

[354] The Church of San Silvestro in Capite was offered as a titular church to the newly elected cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein, an Oratorian, in March 1599. Works were under way under the predecessors Pierre de Gondy (1588-94) and Francesco d'Avilla (1597-1599). Carlo Maderno became the architect of the church in 1594. The church was consecrated on May 13, 1601. The vault, by Cristoforo Roncalli, was finished under Clement VIII. See Stefania Macioce, 1990. 153.

[355] Unfortunately, up to this point, I could not finish my archival research on these frescoes in order to be able to conclude more precisely on their date and to elaborate more on the commission. Scholars have hitherto proposed different dates for the frescoes. Based on a note by Baglione on the Alberti Brothers and on stylistic considerations, Morton C. Abromson considered the frescoes prior to the Sala Clementina commissioned in 1596. His stylistic considerations are based on the differences in the complexity of the perspectival schemes employed by the artists in the two commissions, the Sala Clementina presenting a much more sophisticated use of perspective (for the *quadratura* in the Sala Clementina, see Laura De Carlo, "Lo sfondatto prospettico di Giovanni e Cherubino Alberti nella Sala Clementina in Vaticano," and Daniele Di Marzio, "La Sala Clementinia in Vaticano. Procedimento per la costruzione diretta della prospettiva su superfici curve: ipotesi teorica e verifica sperimentale," both in *La costruzione dell'architettura illusoria,* ed. Maurizio De Luca (Rome: Gangemi, 1999), 105-120; 153-178. By contrary,

Quirinale bears closer scrutiny.

I consider Michele Ghislieri, who along with Baronius, Bellarmino, and Silvio Antoniano was involved in the reform of the Breviary, responsible for this commission. The Theatine brother Michele Ghislieri, whose name is intentionally identical to that of Pius V, blended his services for his fellow Theatines and for Clement VIII, as well as his tribute to Pius V, into the program of the tribune fresco.[356] Coming from a Jewish family converted to Christianity by Pius V himself in a public event, Michele Ghislieri assumed the first name of the pope when he took the Theatine vows. On the triumphal arch, the pendant coats-of-arms of Clement VIII and Pius V advertise Michele's personal acknowledgments of the pontiffs who transformed his life. Nevertheless, the most interesting aspect of this fresco for the Donation topic lies in it being an extrapolation from Laureti's fresco in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican. The frescos, executed by the Alberti Brothers, the same artists who had painted the frescoes on the vault of the Chapel of St. Sylvester in the Scala Santa complex, brought to life another adaptation of Laureti's vault.[357] The echoes of Laureti's *Explanation of the Donation* in the Alberti frescoes are unmistakable, especially the foreshortened *putto* holding the crown against a red cloth (fig. IV. 61). Clement could not have failed to recognize this visual quotation from a hall he knew very well. The artists who completed the vault under the direction of the Theatine Matteo Zaccolino a few decades later would pick upon the quotation and

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Kristina Hermann Fiore has dated the frescoes to a period posterior to the Sala Clementina. Stefania Macioce dates them in 1600-1601. See Abromson, “Clement VIII's Patronage”: 531-547; Kristina Hermann Fiore. *Disegni degli Alberti: il volume 2503 del Gabinetto nazionale delle stampe: [25 novembre 1983-2 gennaio 1984]*(Rome: De Luca, 1983), 33; and Stefania Macioce, 1990, 157.

[356] There is also a chapel of the Ghilsieri family (*Capella del Presepe*) in the Church.

[357] Filippo Titi attributes the figures on the triumphal arch to Giovanni Alberti, whereas the figures "fuori dell' arco," amongst which the *putin other words*h the crown, to Cherubino. Filippo Titi, 149.

complement it with the *putto* guarding the tiara and the miter (fig. IV. 62).[358] As the fresco purports, Michele may have disagreed with Baronius on the Donation matter as he did on several entries of the Breviary. While the two seigniorial badges attached to the triumphal arch represented the personal affiliations of the Ghilsieri, as well as Clement's thanks to Pius V for his support, they also suggest an endorsement of the subject of the frescoes. Not only did the Aldobrandini coat-of-arms preserve the place that Michele had envisioned for it, but the fact that the pontiff employed the artists to paint the most important Clementine commission, the Sala Clementina in the Vatican, substantiates that Clement appreciated the frescoes in San Silvestro al Quirinale. Once again, artists utilized quotation as a form of juridical confirmation. When designing the program of the Constantinian cycle of the *Nave Clementina,* Baronius had to confront with this type of validation through visual citation. Therefore, we turn to him now.

Baronius' views and the fresco cycle of the Nave Clementina

Baronius fought not the rights of the Church but the whole controversy around the debate on the Donation. Baronius defended papal rights to territorial control, but he negated the historical validity of the document of the donation. He did not repudiate the papal custom of presenting juridical claims through donations. On the contrary, he recognized post-Constantine donations that had what he considered as valid historical

[358] A drawing of an Alberti project for the whole vault might have existed in the Theatine complex on the Quirinal and used by the Theatine Matteo Zaccolino to finish the decoration. Zaccolino died in 1630, therefore 1630 would be the *terminus ante quem* for these frescoes. The Alberti Brothers may have abandoned the project due to a busy schedule with elaborate papal commissions such as the Sala Clementina and the Sacristy of the Church of San Giovanni in Laterano. Zaccolino was an active painter, who was specialized in perspective. Baglione dedicated a *vita* to him, which is the original source for this attribution (later repeated by Filippo Titi). According to Baglione, the figures, thus the *putin other words*h the miter and the tiara, were painted by Giuseppe Agellio da Sorriento. Baglione, *Le vite,* 316-7; Filippo Titi, 149.

justifications such as Pepin's and Charlemagne's. On the other hand, he composed the *Tractatus de Monarchia Siciliae,* inserted in the eleventh volume of *Annales* (1605), in which he drafted the rights of the papacy to territories then under the Spanish crown.[359] Nevertheless, he realized that the multifaceted debate on the Donation of Constantine entangled the Church inescapably. It is relevant to note that Baronius approached the problematic legends regarding Constantine even before the third volume of the *Annales,* in his *Martyrologium Romanum* (1589).[360] In this work, Baronius created an explanatory version of the revised edition of the *Martyrologium Romanum* published during Gregory XIII. First of all, it is intriguing that Baronius took the initiative to comment upon a Post-Tridentine work that was meant to establish the code of its genre. Either because the *Martyrologium* was dedicated to the great supporter of the Donation, Sixtus V, or because Baronius himself did not reach conclusive findings on the Donation by then, Baronius' *Martyrologium* only exposes the complicated issues surrounding the figure of Constantine without condemning the infamous Donation. But three years later, Baronius' third volume of the *Annales* (1592), comprising mostly deeds of Constantine the Great, proclaimed the inauthenticity of the Donation. According to Baronius, his commitment to truth guided his revision of ecclesiastical history, but one must not ignore the political and ecclesiological implications of reshaping the past of the Church. Interestingly, although the volume was issued in the same year of the election of Clement VIII, its dedicatee was the Spanish king Philip II, to whom Baronius, as a citizen of Sora in the Kingdom of Naples, owed his loyalty. The text may appear to have served the Spanish

[359] Cyriac K Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius*, 103-116.
[360] For my discussion of the *Martyrologium* and Constantine, see Chapter II.

interest both through the emulative comparison of Philip II to Constantine and through the denial of the Donation that suited the Caesaro-papist politics of the Spanish king.[361] However, Baronius' work did not get much appreciation from Philip II.[362] Later on, Baronius redressed what may have caused a philo-Spanish tendency with the *Tractatus de Monarchia Siciliae*. Baronius' statements prompted the Spanish court to sanction the historian's work.[363] In addition, other serious political situations alerted the Spaniards. The absolution of Henry IV was not seen as favorable to the Spanish faction who felt threatened to lose the dominance at the papal court. Baronius ascertained the donations of the French kings, not randomly in a volume dedicated to the converted Henry IV in the Jubilee year of 1600. Baronius' orientation towards the theory that temporal power derived from the spiritual helped him to eliminate the controversy around Constantine but at the same time could cause the French to become supreme founders of the territorial extension of the papacy because the next important historical donations following Constantine's had been made by the Frankish King Pepin and his son Charlemagne. Even though the *Annales* denied the Donation, it offered plenty of support for the papal policy of terrestrial control.

Baronius' methods of scrutinizing the past did not always pertain to identical standards of assessing veracity. Baronius contested the historical ground of the Donation, but other dubious details of Constantine's life, such as the controversial version of the

[361] For the comparison, see the preface of the *Annales*, III. For the Donation in the Spanish context (especially during Philip II's father, Charles V), see Guido M. Cappelli, "Il dibattito sulla Donazione di Costantino nella Spagna imperiale," in *Costantino il Grande tra medioevo et età moderna*, ed. Giorgio Bonamente, Giorgio Cracco, Klaus Rosen (Bologna: il Mulino, 2008), 181-208.
[362] Cyriac K Pullapilly, *ibidem*. Stefano Zen, *Baronio storico: controriforma e crisi del metodo umanistico*. (Napoli: Vivarium, 1994), 279-286.
[363] The eleventh volume of the *Annales* was published only in 1605 but news about Spanish bans against Baronius' work in the Spanish territories circulated in Rome as early as 1594. See, Pullapilly, *ibidem*. Stefano Zen, *idem*.

baptism at the hand of Sylvester, he unquestionably confirmed. In his attempt to disassociate the Roman Church from the Donation controversy, he overdid his demonstration of the speciousness of the document by finding the Greeks culpable for the forgery, without adducing any proof.[364] In general, Baronius scrupulously prioritized ecclesiastical sources. It becomes clear, I suggest, that Baronius' goal was to validate the *Acta Sylvestri*, and that the logic behind his decision lay in solving the conflict between the *Acta* and the Donation. The *Acta Sylvestri* mentioned both an edict of Constantine that established the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome and particular lands granted to ecclesiastical establishments. Thus, the *Acta Sylvestri* contained precious information to bolster the authority of pontiffs. Although the *Acta Sylvestri* included no reference to the Donation of Constantine, it sustained that St. Sylvester had performed the baptism of the emperor in Rome.[365] As explained earlier, both the Donation and the baptism of Constantine were susceptible to dubitation. In order to save the baptism as Roman, Baronius eliminated the Donation but highlighted the generous gifts of the emperor for the Church. Similarly, as we have seen in Chapter II, the change in focus from the Donation to the gifts had been made in the 1570's in the corpus of *Mirabilia Urbis* for its publication for the Jubilee of 1575, and during a time when Gregory XIII had been living with doubts about the Donation.[366] Baronius insisted on his position that only gifts and no

[364] From a political perspective, Clement VIII had to distance himself from such a statement if he wanted to conclude his plan on the union between the long-embattled Eastern and Roman Churches. For this issue see Pastor, , *The History of the Popes*, vol. 24 109-124.
[365] Baronius also approached the fabled details of the *Acta Sylvestri*, such as the story of St. Sylvester and the dragon which was threatening Rome with pestilence, and the leprosy of Constantine. Baronius considered the former faulty but the latter initially plausible and later veracious. Baronius, *Annales*, 216 b; 238 d-e.
[366] For the *Mirabilia*, and equally Onofrio Panfinio's *Le Sette Chiese di Roma* (1570), see Chapter II. For Gregory, see Chapter III. In addition, the pilgrimage to the seven churches, for which religious guides to

other donation had been made by Constantine even in his last volume of the *Annales* dedicated to Paul V.[367] The presentation of gifts but not of the Donation supposedly created a state of ambiguity for the advocates of the Donation. For these, all the particular donations would have contributed to the plausibility of the Donation. In a manuscript treatise from the beginning of the seventeenth century (*Trattato in difesa della Donazione fatta dal Gran Constantino alla Chiesa Romana nella persona di S. Silvestro Pontefice Romano*), the author's endeavor to defend the Donation led him to mock Baronius' stance in a telling short poem that reflects a total state of ambiguity.[368] While the story on the baptism of Constantine according the *Acta Sylvestri* tended to be accepted widely in Catholic circles, Baronius' elegant solution of emphasizing the gifts offered by Constantine could create a comfortable confusion, despite Baronius' clear statement on the inauthenticity of the Donation.

The references to the *Acta Sylvestri* invoked in the pictorial cycle of the Nave Clementina attest not to its legendary aspects but to papal authority. No detail of the frescoes addresses directly the stories of Constantine's leprosy, what Gilio called *favolosa,* or Sylvester's deed of sealing off the dragon in an underground cave.[369] These frescoes focus on Constantine's realization that he had to recognize ecclesiastical authority. The *Baptism*, the last episode in the series on the east wall, acts as a transformational marker for the Constantinian deeds before and after the acceptance of

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Rome were printed, was intensively promoted by the Oratorians (an order to which Baronius belonged). See Chapter II.

[367] For Paul V and the *Annales*, see Chapter V.

[368] "Si disse che no'l disse; et pur lo disse/ Ma il disse in certo modo che no'l disse/ Anzi che' le disee et contra si lo disse." *Trattato in difesa della Donazione fatta dal Gran Constantino alla Chiesa Romana nella persona di S. Silvestro Pontefice Romano*, Barb. Lat. 4602, fol. 116-165, BAV.

[369] For Gilio's characterization of this story as *favolosa*, see Chapter II.

the sacrament. The *Baptism of Constantine* (fig. IV. 50), an event so vehemently claimed by the Church on the basis of the *Acta Sylvestri*, emerges as the real moment of Constantine's conversion. In order to reinforce this idea, the other episode that presented competition in terms of conversion, the *Vision of the Cross*, was perspicaciously omitted from the cycle. The first scene in the series, the *Triumph of Constantine* (fig. IV. 47, 58), implies the existence of a victory. Although the victory episode was absent, the versed clearly knew that Constantine defeated Maxentius following the emperor's Vision of the Cross. Nevertheless, the Constantine portrayed in this *Triumph* appears not joyous at all but rather submissive to the current custom of adoring humans. According to Giovanni Pietro Bellori, Annibale Carracci criticized Bernardino Cesari's rendition of the *Triumph*, especially for failing to provide a victorious pose for the emperor.[370] It may be, in fact, that the artist was asked to capture Constantine in a posture that was indicative of the emperor's realization of an unfulfilled spiritual metamorphosis, despite his recent victory. Thematically, there is a cleavage between the *Triumph of Constantine* and the rest of the narrative that underlines the instrumentalization of the *Triumph* as a prologue for a gradual development of a story that recounts the emperor’s recognition of ecclesiastical authority. Notwithstanding his visionary experience of the cross, it is the vision of St. Peter and St. Paul that leads to the acknowledgment of papal supremacy by calling Sylvester from Mount Sorrate, and then with the help of Sylvester to the baptism of the emperor. In a demonstrative act of gratitude, Constantine founds the Lateran Basilica, witnesses its consecration and a miracle that one may say is a confirmation role of his

[370] According to this account, Annibale called the portrait of Constantine as that of a "disgraziato." Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Le Vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, ed. Evelina Borea and Giovanni Previtali. Torino: G. Einaudi, 1976, 85.

benevolent deeds, and endows the Basilica with lavish gifts. In contrast to the Constantinian cycle in the Benediction Loggia that the viewer could see before entering the basilica through the transept entrance (figs. IV 35, 37), the frescoes of the *Nave Clementina* propose a look at the imperial triumph not at the pope's *possesso* and at the gifts offered by Constantine not at the handling of the Donation document. These changes have the virtue of mollifying the tension around the Donation, but the Clementine frescoes preserved the intent of celebrating the authority of the pope as the Sistine cycle did. However, unlike the latter whose focus was preeminently on the juridical dimension of the Constantinian legends, the *Nave Clementina* prioritized, as Baronius preferred, the understanding of Church authority as perpetuated by the *Acta Sylvestri*. The cycle confirmed the mediatory role of the Church, for whose practical needs cult establishments had to be erected. Through the frescoes of the *Nave Clementina* for the Jubilee of 1600, both the Basilica and the protagonists of its foundation, Constantine and St. Sylvester, were perpetually honored.

Baglione's Donation to the Lateran

The *Donation to the Lateran*, across from the *Triumph*, concludes the section of four episodes on the west side devoted to the celebration of the Lateran. Baglione, the youngest of the team of consecrated artists at the court of Sixtus V, received the important task of conveying the distinction between the donation of gifts and that of temporal power. Aware of earlier versions of the *Donation of Constantine*, he knew that what had to be changed was the object of donation represented either through the document, as in the Sistine frescoes, or through the statue of Rome as in Romano-Penni's, or through the

tiara as in Raphael's. The comparison between the fresco (fig. IV. 54) and the preparatory drawings, the Oxford and Besançon drawings (fig. IV. 56-7), shows that what concerned the artist most was revising the relationship between the emperor and the pope. The drawings address more poignantly the tension between the imperial and papal power. The incoherence of the architectural backdrop sketched in the Oxford drawing (fig. IV. 54) indicates that Baglione either oscillated staging the event between inside and just outside the Basilica or intended to use the arcade structure in the central field, and partially superimposed on the facade of the Lateran Palace, as an ephemeral structure built for the event. He clearly separated the fields occupied by the emperor and Sylvester by inserting soldiers in the foreground (four soldiers in the Oxford drawing (fig. IV. 56), alternating the naked with the dressed, and only three soldiers but in different poses in the Besançon drawing (fig. IV. 57)). At the same time, the connection between Constantine and Sylvester is graphically transmitted by the line of soldiers that commences with Constantine's interlocutor and continues in the background with those who fulfill the order of the emperor by carrying the gifts for the Lateran. In the Oxford drawing, Baglione pointed out the official dignity of the two protagonists by showing them enthroned. The relationship between the two emerges as a transaction between the heads of two organs of power. Baglione's preparatory drawing established the emperor in more preeminent position, a situation considerably redressed in the fresco.[371] The detail with Pope Sylvester receiving a gift is reminiscent of the Romano-Penni solution. It is what

[371] Maryvelma Smith O' Neil sees the drawing as an attentive study not only of the Romano-Penni fresco but also of Federico Zuccari's *Obedience of the Emperor Frederick to Pope Alexander III* in the Sala Regia. While I already pointed out the relationship with the paradigmatic rendering of the subject by Romano and Penni, I disagree on paralleling Baglione's *Donation to the Lateran* with Federico Zuccari's fresco. See Maryvelma Smith O' Neil, 87.

most probably prompted a modification in this area of the composition. Consequently, in the Besançon drawing, Pope Sylvester stands in front of the Basilica. However, in this case, the relationship between Constantine and Sylvester must have seemed too detached, so a new version was needed. A humble Constantine kneeling in front of the pope as in the fresco recalls the Romano-Penni solution as well, but the upright position of Sylvester departs from it and attempts to avoid any association with the earlier fresco. In all of Baglione's known drawings and fresco of the *Donation to the Lateran*, Constantine is consistently shown empty-handed but with his right hand pointing towards the gifts. Indeed, the gifts are the focus of the fresco. Contextually, the objects could allude to several objects in the possession of the Basilica deemed of Constantinian origins or to the rich sacred vessels offered by Clement VIII to the Basilica.[372] As previously noted, Baglione's display of vessels recalls the Coronation of Charlemagne in the Stanza dell'Incendio.[373] The event of the coronation of Charlemagne stirred no controversies except for certain corollaries drawn from it by the papacy, namely the *translatio imperii*. As we will see in the last chapter, the *translatio imperii* enlivened the debate on the infamous Donation. The similar exhibition of sacred objects in the two episodes exemplify Baglione's usage of visual quotation as confirmation of an act based on a veracious precedent as in Alberti's reference to Laureti's frescoes in the Sala di Costantino. Baglione's conceit of showing the gifts in the foreground allows the eye to linger on them and to take in this essential information.[374] It obliges the viewer to

[372] Ciaconius, "Anno eodem 1595," IV, 266.
[373] Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600*, 116.
[374] By contrast, D. Stephen Pepper sees Baglione's solution simply as a reminiscence of mannerism. D. Stephen Pepper, "Two drawings by Baglione for the "Gift of Constantine," *Master Drawings* 8, No.3 (Autumn 1970): 267-269, 318-319.

conclude that only gifts were brought to that meeting between the emperor and the Bishop of Rome. The silhouette of the Lateran visible in the vicinity of the Basilica signals the fact that the palace was given to the pontiffs. However, like Platina, Baronius thought that Constantine donated the Lateran Palace not to Pope Sylvester but to his predecessor Pope Miltiades.[375] The meticulous staging of the scene with the gifts in the foreground made Luigi Spezzaferro rightly note that the episode promotes Sylvester's role as the Bishop of Rome, in other words, the import of spiritual over terrestrial power. This may have been the message that the pope wanted to publicize for the pilgrims of the Jubilee in 1600. None of the episodes shows Sylvester wearing the tiara, not even the *Baptism of Constantine*. However, as an inquisitive historian like Baronius knew, the events at the Lateran anteceded the date attributed to the fictive act of donation. The frescoes of the *Nave Clementina* translated visually selected episodes from Constantine's life up to the Lateran moment.

The very belonging of the *Donation to the Lateran* to the section of the narrative apportioned to the Lateran created a conundrum. Regardless of how it attempted to repress any associations with the Donation of Constantine or challenge the Donation, it could not. Although Baronius envisioned the *Donation to the Lateran* as a reflection of his concerns regarding the Donation, advocates of the Donation could argue that the episode simply represented a particular donation and did not hinder the visual tradition of the Donation theme. It is evident that while the *Decretum Gratiani* of 1582 did not suspend the controversy on the Donation, the Church could not negate its existence without a reassessment at least of this particular section of canon law. The various

[375] Baronius, *Annales*, III, 84 b-c. For the discussion on the donation of the Lateran Palace, See Chapter II.

interpretations on the Donation concluded with either discrediting or approving it. Regardless of the pope's personal position, he did not initiate any legal act against the Donation. The article on the Donation remained in the *Decretum Gratiani*, and Valla's *De credita* on the *Index prohibitorum*. Clement could not ignore the validated canon law. The pope wanted to have peace in his own back yard. With the *Donation to the Lateran*, everyone could consider himself satisfied. The particular donation avoided the Donation of Constantine but did not automatically exclude it. The ambivalent context must have appealed to the pontiff as well. In the end, he was the commissioner. The ambiguity the viewer is confronted with when he realizes that either reading of the message was plausible shows an astute modality of dealing with the delicate issue. Clement's approach to the problematic nature of the Donation would throw into doubt Francis Bacon's remark that dissimulation pertains to politicians who lack discernment with regard to what to expose either totally or partially and to whom to expose it.[376] The conundrum, like the debate on grace, could be passed on to later generations.

Conclusion

The last two decades of the sixteenth century witnessed in Rome an intense strife over the juridical definition of the status of the Donation and the visual representation of the object of donation. Although Laureti's elaborate explanation of what Constantine had donated was subsequently quoted in two instances, a new explanation of the object of donation was rethought during the papacy of Sixtus V. In this triumphant period for the

[376] Francis Bacon, *Essays on Counsels, Civil, and Moral* (1626), ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27-31.

Donation, visual representations of the subject implied the array of items offered by Constantine through the document as the object of donation. At the dawn of the century, the object of donation takes the form of liturgical vases in the *Donation of the Lateran*. But this last was solely a particular donation that could not replace the forms purported by previous renditions of the Donation. Indeed, when Paul V Borghese commissioned a new illustration of the theme few years later, artists, along with their advisers, relied on the representation prescribed under Sixtus V.

Chapter V

Genealogies of Donations to the Papacy: The *Donation of Constantine* as Origin and Paradigm

The ambiguous attitude toward the Donation of Constantine persisted in Rome after the death of Clement VIII in 1605. The papal court, nonetheless, continued to utilize imagery related to Constantine's act of donation, as this chapter will demonstrate. From the perspective of the papacy, the Donation of Constantine represented the first ever secular−and imperial−donation made in favor of the Roman Church. The Donation signified the origin of all subsequent donations received by the Holy See. For the papacy, this was a fundamental condition that could not be easily ignored when evaluating the problematic nature of the document of the Donation. The Donation was bound up not only with the abstract concept of temporal power, but also with foundation of the Papal States in their territorial dimension. The renunciation of the Donation of Constantine, therefore, would have had consequences for how the Papal States were conceptualized and how their history was presented. One alternative solution was to establish the source of papal temporal power into the realm of the divine, a position we encountered principally in Bellarmino's and Baronius' works. Serious pragmatic questions remained, however, with regard to the original territorial possessions of the Papal States.

If Constantine were not to be considered the first donor of lands, then the documentary record suggested that the founders of the Papal States would have had to

have been the eight-century western rulers, beginning with the Longobard kings Aribertus and Liutprand, followed by the Frankish kings Pepin and Charlemagne. According to ecclesiastical accounts, reiterated most recently in Baronius' compilation the *Annales*, the first documented reference to the granting of territories by secular rulers to the papacy appeared in connection with the Longobard king Aribertus.[377] From the papal perspective, the replacement of Emperor Constantine with King Aribertus as the founder of the donation tradition would have seriously undermined the claim of the papacy to territorial control. Aribertus was an unfamiliar historical figure, without Constantine's stature, reputation, and historical significance. Furthermore, the language of this particular donation implied not the endowment of the papacy with new territory, but rather the restitution of certain lands previously in the possession of the papacy. This left open the question of who had donated territories to the papacy prior to the eighth century, circling back to the problematic Donation of Constantine. Depending on one's opinion on the Donation of Constantine, Emperor Constantine preserved his role as a donor but not necessarily a donor of geographically extensive territories.

The Donation of Constantine, even if regarded as problematic, offered the most compelling scenario for the origins of the Papal States and the practice of endowing the papacy with domain. Constantine's act of donation was indeed the paradigm of donations, and the contested origin of a genealogy of similar donations. In referring to a genealogy of donations, I point to the succession of historical donations bestowed upon the papacy by various secular rulers over the centuries. The importance of this genealogy of donations, and the related visual tradition in the medieval and early modern periods, has

[377] Baronius, *Annales*, VII, 35-36.

been overlooked in the scholarship on the papacy and on the Donation of Constantine.

The argument advanced in this chapter is that when it became more difficult for the papacy to defend the Donation of Constantine, a new rhetorical strategy was developed. Constantinian imagery was embedded in a visual matrix of historical donations in order both to confer credibility on the Donation and to preserve a coherent history of the Papal States. I will begin by demonstrating how a "genealogy of donations" was presented in texts of various genres, and then turn to visual material that exhibits genealogies of donations.

Historical accounts of the Church could be comprehensive in scope but could also revolve around particular aspects of the institution. Two common approaches in historical writing were accounts of the history of the popes and treatises that focused on sensitive issues related to the papacy. Narratives about the donations of territories offered to the papacy throughout the centuries could fit into either of these approaches. Such narratives could formulate the claim to papal possessions that had been acquired centuries earlier and could be expressed both in texts and in images. Early in the defense of the Donation of Constantine against Lorenzo Valla's *Declamatio,* Agostino Steuco pointed to subsequent historical donations—those of Pepin, Charlemagne, Otto I, and Peter of Aragon—as confirmation of Constantine's Donation.[378] Documents of the *Patrimonia Sancti Petri*, such as the one in the Fondo Boncompagni in the Vatican Library dating from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, enumerated a multitude of donations starting with the Donation of Constantine (see Appendix 2). Similarly, there were

[378] "Quod ea que Pipinus, & Carolus Magnus, Henricus, Othóq; Imperator Ecclesiae dederunt, errant prius Ecclesiae: sed à Barbaris occupatam ab eis restituita sunt reginae." Agostino Steucchi. *Contra Laurentium Vallam De falsa donationi Constantini*. Lugundi 1546, 202.

manuscript collections of documents that recorded not only the Donation of Constantine but also many other historical donations. An example is a Chigi manuscript which contains such a list of donations, entitled *Donazione di Costantino Imperatore e di altri principi et di homaggi alla Santa Sede* (datable to the seventeenth century; see Appendix 3). Such evidence attests to an interest in creating a homogenous dossier of the donations by which the papacy could claim and justify its rights to terrestrial power.[379]

The question of historical donations was approached not only in texts specifically dedicated to the debate. In his *Memorie Sacre delle Sette Chiese di Roma* (1630) dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Giovanni Severano presented a list of donations starting with Charlemagne's. As we will see in the next chapter in more detail, the absence of the Donation of Constantine from Severano's list was consistent with the policy of the contemporary papacy of Urban VIII Barberini (1623-1644) of not referring directly to the Donation of Constantine. However, laudatory comments on Constantine's construction campaign of ecclesiastical establishments and their endowment for liturgical purposes abound. With regard to other historical donations, Severano's list differs from the usual compilations of gifts made to the papacy by powerful rulers included in descriptions of the most important pilgrimage churches of Rome. This perhaps can be explained by the author's need to stress the unique functions of St. Peter's, such as serving as the site for the coronation of emperors. The list of donations is arranged principally according to how the donor made his donation, whether in person or in absentia, and secondarily according to chronological order within each of these

[379] *Donazione di Costantino Imperatore e di altri principi et di homaggi alla Santa Sede.* Chigi, GIII.67, fol. 1-207

categories.[380] An enumeration of the emperors who were crowned in St. Peter's marks the transition between the two categories, and thus acts as a conclusion of the category of those who made donations in person and also received the crown of the empire on the same occasion. Fascinatingly, Severano inserted his list of donations into the part of his book on the archeological exploration of the ancient Constantinian church of St. Peter's. There it suggestively appears in a sub-section addressing the piety shown by emperors, kings, and other royal or princely figures to the Church. Such a framing of historical information may be seen as a tactic in the strategy of dissimulation. Severano's method of crafting his text to accommodate the list of donations anticipates the complex discursive strategies that were used in the visual representations of the genealogies of donations discussed at length here.

This chapter examines with two instances when the Donation of Constantine was invoked within visual cycles representing genealogies of donations to the papacy. The first of these was created during the pontificate of Paul V (1605-1621) and the second during the pontificate of Alexander VII (1655-1667). In the former case, the fresco cycle features the *Donation of Constantine*. In order to offer a more nuanced explanation of the Donation, the fresco of the *Donation* elaborates on certain visual strategies that were introduced in recent renditions of the subject. In the latter case, Constantinian imagery serves reflexively as a proxy for the absent Donation scene in the genealogy of donations.

[380] Severano, *Le Sette Chiese*, 182-214. Severano even included a transcription of one of the donation documents; see Severano, *Le Sette Chiese*,187.

Paul V's Endorsement of the Donation Phenomenon: the Frescoes of the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum

Although both Baronius and Bellarmino entered the conclaves of 1605 among the top candidates to ascend to the papal throne, neither was endorsed in the final votes. The first conclave, in April of 1605, voted in favor of Cardinal Alessandro Ottaviano de' Medici (Leo XI). Only a month later, in a second conclave following the death of the new pope, Cardinal Camilo Borghese was elected. [381] By taking the name Paul, Camilo Borghese hinted at his intention to consolidate the Church by combating heretics, in this case the Protestants for whom the Apostle Paul had become the guiding prophet. The politics of the Borghese pontificate are better known for nepotism in favor of Scipione Borghese, the strained relationships with the Venetian Republic, and the impact on the religious conflicts in Europe that led to the Thirty Years' War.

Artistically, the pontiff's mark is immediately recognizable in the grandiose commissions at St. Peter's and the Quirinal Palace, as well as in the pope's own funerary chapel in the Roman Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Renovations to the Vatican Palace also occupied the pontiff, with less attention given to the recently-restored Lateran Palace. Paul V focused on the expansion and decoration of the newest papal palace, the Quirinal Palace, instead. The pontiff's decision to transfer the administration of the Lateran Palace to the Lateran canons late in his papacy, in 1618, may suggest a lack of interest in the Lateran Palace. However, this decision should not be interpreted as a break with the Constantinian legacy. Rather, as I would argue, Paul V's restoration of the Quirinal Palace was meant to be seen as a major contribution, comparable, in amplitude,

[381] The Spaniards opposed Baronius' election. See Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius*, 105. Zen, *Baronio storico*, 74.

to Sixtus' intervention at the Lateran.[382] The architectural plan adopted at the Quirinal Palace replicated the plan employed at the Vatican in the succession of the halls of the Sala Regia and the Cappella Paolina, spaces that bore identical names in both palaces.[383]

While the pictorial decorations of the Sala Regia in the Vatican and the Lateran Palace presented, as we have seen, a mix of earlier and more recent historical events, Paul V promoted the appreciation of current events in the Sala Regia of the Quirinal Palace. The main decoration of the Sala Regia presents to the beholder the tribute brought by contemporary European and non-European ambassadors to Paul V himself. In the Sale Paoline, commissioned by Paul V in extending the Sale Sistine of the Vatican Library, depictions of contemporary and past events adorn the two rooms. A sense of continuity is provided in the passage from the Sale Sistine into the Paoline rooms as the decorative programs in the two rooms are ideologically comparable: the good deeds of the two pontiffs adorn the rooms (fig. V. 1).[384] Nevertheless, the past *per se* was equally a fundamental concern of the Borghese papacy.

This is evident in Paul V's foundation of the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum in 1612 as a unique repository for all archival treasures of the Church (figs. V.2-22). The pontiff allocated to the Archivum four rooms adjacent to the Vatican Library that had formerly been the residence of the Cardinal Librarian.[385] At the same time, he

[382] Evidently, Paul V was not indifferent at all when he approved the commission of the statue of Henry IV of Navarra for the portico of the transept entrance (fig. V. 28)
[383] Like the Vatican Pauline Chapel built in honor of the patron-saint of the Pope Paul III, the Quirinal Chapel was dedicated to the same patron-saint of Paul V.
[384] The program includes a combination of events of the Borghese papacy and of glorious past foundations of libraries, including those of Trajan and Constantine.
[385] The apartment had been created during Sixtus V. See Martino Giusti, "L'Archivum Segreto Vaticano," in *Il Vaticano e Roma Cristiana*, ed. Mario Carrieri (Città del Vaticano: Libreria editrice vaticana, 1975), 335-353; Vittorio Peri, "*Progetti e rimostranze. Documenti per la storia dell'Archivum Segreto Vaticano*

commissioned a fresco decoration that, as the following discussion will demonstrate, resonated ideologically with the very function of the space to protect the Church's past. Furthermore, as I shall argue, the foundation of the Archivum reflects the contemporary interest in what Jan Snyder has called the "culture of secrecy," characterized by the assiduous collection and protection of information by means of dissimulation.[386]

The very first years of the Archivum Secretum Vaticanum's existence made clear the necessity for an established set of rules for its organization and for a decorative scheme that would echo the function of the space. The original location of the Archivum, as well as the fact that the first custodians of the Archivum were also custodians of the Vatican Library, suggests that the Archivum was initially subordinated to the Library. In addition, contemporary documents related to the decoration of the Archivum refer to it as a dependence of the Library, as the *Archivio della Libreria*.[387] However, steps for transforming the Archivum into an independent institution had been taken early in its existence. In 1616, Paul V proclaimed that the Archivum had to have its own personnel.[388] The fact that a special fresco decoration was designed for the Archivum suggests that the space was not regarded merely as storage.[389]

There is little documentation related to the refurbishment of the space of the Archivum. Nor is there much information regarding the chronology of the work on the

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dall'erezione alla metà del XVIII secolo," Archivum Historiae Pontificia 19, 1981, 191-237. Terzo Natalini and Sergio M. Pagano, *Archivio secreto vaticano* (Città del Vaticano: Archivio segreto vaticano, 2000).

[386] J. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture*, 4-5.

[387] For instance: "A di detto (2 March 1613), A Anibale Durante Indoratore scudi cento di moneta quali si li fanno pagare a bon conto della pittura delle doe stantie piccole dell'Archivio della libreria del Palazzo Vaticano..." ASR, Camerale I, Fabbriche, b. 1537, fol. 232 v (published in Beatrice Cirulli, "Una proposta di lettura degli affreschi dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano (1612-1613)," in *Arte e immagine del papato Borghese: 1605-1621*. ed. Bruno Toscano (San Casciano V.P. (FI), Italia: Libro Co. Italia, 2005), 124.

[388] Breve di 30 gennaio 1616, ASV, Segreteria dei Brevi.

[389] The documents were preserved in the cabinets below the frescoes. According to the coats-of-arms adorning the cabinets, they are datable to the papacies of Paul V, Innocent X, and Alexander VII.

frescoes executed there. The decorative program extended to three rooms of the Archivum. According to the inscription on the ceiling in the third room—"PAULUS V PM AN VIII"—and the documentary evidence, the decorations could have plausibly been completed between 1612 and 1614 (fig. V. 19). Questions regarding the dating remain, however.[390] Even though the works may have continued beyond 1614, the major modifications and pictorial embellishments can be dated, as we will see, to the pontificate of Paul V.

The physical space of the Archivum when viewed from the Salone Sistino (fig. V.3), with the bust of the Borghese pope affixed on the wall in a niche framed by an oval stucco moulding above the entrance door, is conceived of as a separate entity (fig. V. 14, 20-22).[391] Borghese heraldry abounds, including both the insignia of the pope and that of his nephew Scipione, on account of his position as the custodian of the Vatican Library. Upon entering the first room of the Archivum, one beholds the portrait of the patron, Paul V Borghese. On the opposite wall a personification of *Perpetuitas* reminds the visitor who is about to exit the Archivum of the commitment of the institution to conserve its treasure beyond the mundane notion of time (fig. V. 4, 6). [392] Each of the three rooms hosts a series of acts of donation to the papacy made by diverse European rulers either directly or indirectly through legates. The chronology of donations extends from the fourth through the fourteenth century, from Emperor Constantine the Great to the

[390] The inscription naming Paul V appears only in the third room. It marks the eighth year of his pontificate (May 1613-May 1614).
[391] No documentary evidence regarding this bust has surfaced so far.
[392] A payment note, dated 1614, indicates that initially a personification similar to *Perpetuitas* had to adorn the surface of the wall where the portrait of Paul V is located now. Document reproduced by Cirulli., "Una proposta," 127.

Landgrave Heinrich von Essen.[393] While the majority of the donations involved territories, along with material goods produced in these territories, a few others referred to revenues coming from certain lands. The donation scenes tend to present a limited variety of formulaic renderings of the donation theme. What differentiates them, for the most part, is the degree of parity or submission shown in the relationship between the pontiff and ruler. The distinction is dictated by the importance of the historical figures: Constantine, Charlemagne, and Otto I stand out as equal to their contemporary pontiffs (fig. V. 23, 25, 27).[394]

On the ceiling of each room, a central panel is surrounded by an intricate arrangement of *grotteschi*, religious personifications, landscapes, and Borghese heraldry (fig. V. 20-22). The central panels exhibit different subjects: Mercury holding the reins of Pegasus in the first room, a concert of angels in the second room, and the triumph of the Borghese pontiff in the third room. The frescoes on the ceilings appear to have been painted with more dexterity than the donation scenes on the walls. The rather mediocre execution and the formulaic appearance of the donation scenes account for the lack of serious scholarly engagement with this part of what is otherwise a very well studied palace. The approach taken in this chapter is little concerned with artistic proficiency. The

[393] Taking into consideration the focus of this dissertation and the fact that the Donation of Constantine represented the origin of subsequent donations, the enumeration starts with the Donation of Constantine. In the third room are depicted the donations of Constantine the Great, King Louis the Pious, Emperor Otto I, Emperor Henry II, Emperor Otto IV, Emperor Frederic II, King Gugliermo, Emperor Rudolph I, Emperor Henry VII, Emperor Albert I, Emperor Charles IV. In the second room, the donations of Spitihnev II Duke of Bohemia, Stephen I King of Hungary, Demetrius Duke of Croatia and Dalmatia, Matilda of Canossa, Peter I King of Aragon, Roger II Count of Sicily, and Afonso King of Portugal. In the first room, the donations of the Longobard King Aribertus, Pepin the Frankish King, Charlemagne, Casmir King I of Poland, King Henri II, John I King of England, Reginaldus of the Isle of Man, and the Landgrave Heinrich von Essen.

[394] The *Donation of Otto I* is very similar to Baglione's first solution for the *Donation to the Lateran* (see Chapter IV).

aim is to enrich significantly our understanding of both the decorative program in the Archivum and the donation phenomenon at the papal court in the early seventeenth-century.

Until recently, the scholarship on the frescoes in the Archivum has been confined to comments in appendices into studies dedicated to other topics. Beatrice Cirulli, in an article written in 2005, was the first to treat the Archivum project in an independent study.[395] Although the main concern so far has been to identify the authors of the frescoes, scholars of the Archivum have not shied away from proposing reasons for the depiction of the donation theme. The most obvious explanation relates to the function the Archivum, as the papal archive in which the original historical donation documents were preserved.[396] However, the Archivum possessed not only donation documents. Consequently, other motivations for the choice of the pictorial program have been advanced. Given the political message of a donation scene, it has been suggested there was an interest at this time, on the part of the papacy, in calling attention to the dependence of temporal rulers on spiritual power.[397]

A major political circumstance of the day was the conflict with the Venetian Republic that began shortly after the election of Paul V. This conflict has been appropriately linked to the selection of the donation theme for the decorative cycle, although without adequate explanation of how this association with historical events was

[395] Before B. Cirulli, Elena Fumagali 's commented on the Archivum in her analysis of the Borghese undertakings. Elena Fumagali, "Paolo V Borghese in Vaticano. Appartamenti privati e di rapressentanza," *Storia dell'Arte* 88 (1996): 241-370.
[396] Cirulli, “Una proposta” 110 and 117, note 4 (for earlier bibliography).
[397] Cirulli, Idem. 109.

made.[398] The conflict between the papacy and Venice, known as the "Venetian Interdict," was ignited in 1605 and involved not only the two parties but also France and Spain. The Catholic monarchical powers took opposed sides, with France supporting Venice and Spain the pontiff. The crisis of the "Venetian Interdict" undoubtedly excited the papacy to defend its prerogatives, and one can appreciate how the use of relevant visual arguments was beneficial to the papal cause. At the same time, some caution is necessary in evaluating the thesis advanced by previous scholars that explains the donation theme as illustrating the dominance of spiritual over terrestrial power. This thesis implies a triumphant Church and excludes what I argue to be a major message of the donation scenes: the justification of territorial control by the papacy. In order to grasp the relevance and significance of this message, it is necessary to consider the fresco cycle of twenty-six donation scenes in the larger political context, focusing on the debates at the time over papal prerogatives and the Donation of Constantine. Furthermore, the present chapter takes a position against the view that the ordering of the donation scenes is arbitrary, by demonstrating that there is a rationale behind their arrangement.[399] In accord with the topic of this dissertation, my discussion will also focus closely on the manner in which the *Donation of Constantine* is represented in the Archivum (fig. V. 25). The contribution of the *Donation of Constantine* to the more expansive visual donation theme will be demonstrated, as well as the persistent relevance of the donation theme to the arguments regarding the validity of the Donation of Constantine. As we shall see, the message of the Donation of Constantine was disseminated not only through the visual

[398] Alba Costamagna, "Antonio Viviani, detto il Sordo di Urbino," in *Annuario dell'Università degli Studi di Roma, Istituto di Storia dell'arte* (1973-74): 246-247. Cirulli, “Una proposta”, 112.
[399] For the idea that the frescoes lack a criterion in arrangement see Cirulli, Ibid., 110.

representation of the historical narrative itself but also through the presentation of a series of posterior historical donations featured in the cycle. A look at the political context in the first years of Paul V's pontificate, up to the foundation of the Archivum, will help establish the pontiff's motivations in commissioning the donation scenes.

The Political Arena during the Papacy of Paul V

The legitimacy of the papacy's authority in secular matters had traditionally been at the heart of conflicts between the papacy and secular political entities. As should be very evident by now, the Donation of Constantine fuelled considerable discontent in this regard. In the beginning of his pontificate Paul V intended to redress the state of incertitude regarding the Donation of Constantine inherited from his predecessor Clement VIII by issuing a bull reaffirming its veracity.[400] However, it seems that Baronius' reiteration of his critical views on the Donation in the last volume of the *Annales,* completed just before his death, hindered Paul V's plans. The pontiff initially blocked the publication of Baronius' volume but then he reversed his decision and, instead, abandoned his plan to promulgate the bull.[401] Nevertheless, the pope was not ready to renounce the Donation. Like his predecessor Clement VIII, he did not intervene in the corpus of the *Decretum Gratiani* that preserved the Donation as a rightful act of the canon law.

The Donation continued to be at the center of the political debate on the papal rights to territorial control and political involvement. Dissatisfaction with the Donation

[400] See Vian, *La donazione,* 159.
[401] See Vian, *La donazione,* 155.

characteristically arose in the discourse regarding imperial relations with the papacy. However, the relationship between Paul V and the Holy Roman Emperor of that period Rudolph II, was relatively uncomplicated.[402] Historians have considered Rudolph II's lack of determination in political matters as the primary cause for the beginning of the Thirty Years War in 1618. At the same time, different other European political entities overtly provoked the pontiff in the first part of his papacy, especially Venice, England, and France.

The differences between the Venetian Republic and the papacy had a long history, and the events of 1605-1607 activated hostilities once again. While the Venetian Interdict lasted only about two years, it created an environment in which the prerogatives of the papacy were vehemently under attack.[403]As is well known, the conflict with the papacy led to the transformation of the Venetian Servite Brother Paolo Sarpi into a star of the Venetian opposition against papal pretentions.[404] While there is no need to repeat widely known facts, it is worth pointing out that one of the two laws passed by the Venetian Republic during the period of Interdict involved a prohibition against alienating Venetian real estate in favor of the Church. This was surely a reaction to the papal assertion of territorial rights at the time and is relevant to the donation theme under consideration. It is also notable that, the peace that concluded the Interdict favored Venice, and implicitly

[402] Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 129-150.
[403] John Marino thinks that events of the Interdict influenced the political thought on the topic until later in the century. John A. Marino, *Early Modern Italy, 1550-1796* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 25.
[404] Evidently, like the papal position, Sarpi's opinion was biased. One of Sarpi's most famous writings, composed after the Venetian Interdict, was his history of the Council of Trent. The bibliography on Sarpi is vast. Here are some new perspectives: Tiziana Agostini Nordio, and Corrado Pin, *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi nel 450° anniversario della nascita di Paolo Sarpi*. Convegno internazionale di studi nel 450° anniversario della nascita di Paolo Sarpi (Venice: Ateneo veneto, 2006); Marie F. Viallon, *Paolo Sarpi: politique et religion en Europe* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2010); Natasha Constantinidou, *Responses to Religious Division in Europe, 1580-1620: Public and Private, Divine and Temporal* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 86-112.

created problems for the papacy. Subsequent efforts were made within the papal court to reassert the papacy's rights in order to compensate for the Venetian bans on real estate ceded to the Church and on certain religious orders such as the Jesuits.

Venice was not the only territorial state to enter into political conflict with Paul V from the beginning of his pontificate. Although separatist, the Venetian Republic was overwhelmingly Catholic. More profound contestations of the papal prerogatives were initiated by non-Catholic monarchies like England. As a Protestant, the King of England could in theory ignore the involvement of the papacy in internal affairs. However, the king still had to confront the greater reverence that his Catholic subjects had for the Pope in Rome than for himself. Paul V's relations with the newly enthroned King of England James I grew considerably antagonistic within a few years after the unmasking of an assassination plot against the king in early November 1605. James I himself accused the papacy of organizing what became known as the Gunpowder Plot.[405] The Jesuits in England came to be associated with the plot and were subsequently severely condemned. Drastic measures against Catholics in general followed. In order to ensure the obedience of his Catholic subjects, James I designed an oath of allegiance by which English subjects had to recognize that the king was a rightful sovereign and that the pope had no right to depose him with or without the help of excommunication. The papacy responded with a Brief published on September 22, 1606 that reproduced the text of the oath and emphasized its unacceptable terms. A second papal brief, issued almost a year later, on August 22, 1607, confirmed the invalidity of the oath regardless of any position adopted

[405] He did so in an address to the Parliament on November 9, 1605. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 26, 142; Victor Houliston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580-1610* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 135-6; Natasha Constantinidou, *Responses to Religious Division*, 179-187.

by English Catholics towards it.[406] While reconciliation would have been a solution to the problem, James I opted to respond to the papacy, leading to an escalation in the hostilities. The king, who had already penned two treatises on the monarchical system, threw himself into a refutation of the two Briefs. His book, *Tripilici nodo, triplex cuneus: or an Apology for the Oath of Allegiance*, published anonymously at the beginning of 1608, reiterated the obligation of English Catholics to take the oath.[407] Responses to the book came both from English Catholics and from Rome, in the latter case, from Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino. [408] After the death of Baronius in 1607, the Jesuit Bellarmino was the most preeminent scholar in the service of the papacy. Bellarmino identified the king as the author of the treatise and pointed out his theological misinterpretations that undermined his theory. Obviously irritated by Bellarmino's comments, the king employed clerics to correct his text for a new edition. A year after the anonymous edition, a second one bearing the name of its author was ready for publication. The king enriched the text with an attack against Bellarmino's teachings, especially the theologian's theories on papal prerogatives, and concluded with a strenuous demonstration that the pope was the Antichrist. The king hoped for the support of other European monarchs and state governments but his book received little attention even from opponents of the papacy.

[406] The second Brief was prompted by the declaration of the archbishop Blackwell that the oath was lawful. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 26, 166; Houliston, *Catholic Resistance*, 140.
[407] The book, *Tripilici nodo, triplex cuneus: or an Apology for the Oath of Allegiance, Against the Two Breves of Pope Paul Quintus, and the Late Letter of Cardinal Bellarmine to G. Blackwel, the Arch-priest,* was published in 1608, even if the tile page features the year 1607. Although the book was published anonymously, the title page displayed the royal coat-of-arms and copies of the book were presented to ambassadors; see Pastor, *The History of the Popes,* 26,171; Houliston, Ibid. 142.
[408] Mocking the King, Bellarmino signed his reply not under his name, but under that of his chaplain Matteo Torto.

Neither Venice nor France accepted the publication of the book on their territories.[409]

The crisis between England and the papacy demonstrates that, even if involvement in terrestrial matters was denied to the papacy, the pope was still a powerful political figure and could not be ignored. Even after this verbal exchange, James I expressed to a French mediator his willingness to recognize the Pope as the head in spiritual matters if the pontiff would renounce his claim to deposing the king. Paul V found such a condition unacceptable. Hopes for negotiations remained in abeyance. The pope did not excommunicate of the king but no amelioration in the relationships between the two was foreseeable.

Other tensions appeared in the aftermath of another assassination plot, this time involving the French monarch Henry IV of Navarra in 1610, and resulting in the king's death. These events must have prompted the pope to consider utilizing visual art to promote papal political objectives and prerogatives. From the beginning of his pontificate, Paul V was motivated to instill a more favorable reception of the Church in France. Desiring to honor the conversion of Henry IV of Navarra at the hands of his predecessor Clement VIII, Paul V welcomed the initiative of the Lateran canons to commission a statue of the French king from the French sculptor Nicolas Cordier for a niche adjacent to the transept entrance of the Lateran Basilica (fig. V. 28). In this way, Constantine, the founder of the Basilica and defender of the Holy See, and Henry IV, the most Christian King, became distinctly associated. The statue, inaugurated in 1608, would not have a very long impact on the relationship between the papacy and France as

[409] The book was published secretly in France, commissioned by James I himself; Pastor, *The History of the Popes,* 175.

the King was assassinated around two years later. The assassination of the king brought to light the profound animosity towards the papacy from certain French factions, especially the Huguenots and Gallicans. As is well known, the Jesuits were accused of regicide, and petitions for their banishment from France were addressed to the parliament.

At the same time, a book published by the Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmino, the *Tractatus de potestate summi ponteficis in rebus temporalibus* (1610), created a stir in France.[410] Bellarmino had postulated his theory on the indirect power of the papacy to intervene in secular matters, on account of its spiritual divine origins for the first time in his *Disputationes de controversiis Christiane fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos* (1586). This position was subsequently fully developed in the *Tractatus*.[411] In November 1610, the French parliament considered a motion to ban Bellarmino's treatise. This did not, in the end, come to pass due to the intervention of the regent Maria de Medici.[412] At the same time, anti-papal pamphlets, such as the "Theatre of Antichrist" penned by the Huguenot Vigner, continued to flood the French kingdom.

More elaborate efforts to combat the papacy were formulated in France. Philippe de Mornay, the "pope of the Huguenots," petitioned the parliament against the Jesuits and composed a treatise entitled *The Mysterie of Inquitie: That is to say, The Historie of the Papacie.* The book, published by Mornay first in French in 1610 and translated into English just two years later, represents an opposition to what began to be largely accepted

[410] His *Tractatus*, was composed as a defense against ideas advanced by the Scottish jurist William Barclay. Barclay's book was put on the *Index* shortly after its publication in 1609.
[411] See, Vian, *La donazione,* 154.
[412] Pastor, *The History of the Popes,* 26, 19. There was a bonfire prepared at the order of the French Parliament for Bellarmino's *Tractatus de podestate* not long after its publication in 1610. See Vian, *La donazione,* 154.

in the Catholic milieu as the new canonical version of Church history. [413] The author found motivation for his work in the conversion of Henry IV of Navarra to Catholicism, an act evidently celebrated by Catholics and condemned by Huguenots.[414] Mornay had served the king of Navarra as a counselor prior to the latter's pragmatic conversion, and his personal disappointment with Henry IV must have amplified his hatred for the papacy.[415] Not only did Mornay criticize the Donation of Constantine, but he also considered that the papal claim to authority in temporal matters on the basis of its divine source, as theorized by Baronius and Bellarmino, was abusive in relation to the Gospel.[416]

The papacy came under pressure primarily from the Protestants, but the Sorbonne became involved in the controversy as well. Representatives of Gallicism took the initiative in the attack. Edmund Richter, the syndic of the Sorbonne since 1608, published a pamphlet on the topic in 1611. Although unsigned, the pamphlet was soon attributed to Richter.[417] The author, rephrased the core idea of the debate on the temporal power of the papacy, and emphasized that Christ endowed the papacy with spiritual, and not material power. Richter's position came under the scrutiny of both his colleagues at the Sorbonne

[413] Philip de Mornay, *The Mysterie of Inquitie: That is to say, The Historie of the Papacie. Decalring by what degrees is now mounted to this height, and what oppositions the better sort from time to time have made against it. Where is also defended the right of Emperors, Kings, and Christian Princes, against the assertions of the Cardinals Bellarmine and Baronius. Englished by Samson Lennard* (London: A. Islip, 1612). The first French edition had been issued in 1610. The English edition was dedicated to the Prince of Wales Henry. For Mornay, see also Antonazzi, *Lorenzo Valla*, 182.
[414] For various Protestant responses to the conversion of Henry IV see Michael Wolfe, "Protestant Reactions to the Conversion of Henry IV" in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 371-390.
[415] Mornay's "Introduction to the reader" ends with a demonstration on how the inscription attached to the portraits of the current pope Paul V (*PAULO V VICEDEO*) equates the apocalyptic number of Satan, 666.
[416] Mornay, *The Mysterie of Inquitie*, 23a.
[417] Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 23

and the Jesuits.[418] To the delight of the Catholics, Richter felt obliged to resign in 1612 and the Parliament ruled that the Sorbonne should block any discussions on the topic.[419]

As one can see, the papacy was under attack on multiple fronts in the years preceding the foundation of the Archivum. The frescoes in the Archivum, I propose, represent a concerted effort to respond to these various attacks. The damaging political conflicts, as well as the doubts about the Donation of Constantine, motivated the papacy to communicate through the decorative program in the Archivum considerably more than the practical function of the institution to preserve its essential documents. The more profound message conveyed was the justification of papal claims to temporal power.

The frescoes of the Archivum

Just as in the case of the previous decorative projects undertaken within the Vatican Library, the custodian of the Library played a key role in the selection of the visual themes depicted on the walls of the library complex. With the Brief of January 31, 1612, Paul V nominated the current custodian of the Vatican Library Baldassare Ansidei to the position of custodian of the Archivum as well. Prior to the Archivum project, documents attest to Baldassare Ansidei's role in devising the fresco program in the Sale Paoline in the Vatican Library adjacent to the Sistine rooms. The execution of the decoration in the Sale Paoline took place under the leadership of the painter Giovanni

[418] His colleagues Durand, Duvall, and Jean Filesac and the Jesuits Eudamon Johannes, Gautier, and Sirmon; Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 26, 24.
[419] However, in 1614, the Parliament proceeded with the condemnation of a book written by the Jesuit Francis Suarez (*Defense of the Catholic Faith against the errors of the Anglican sect*). Paul V had supported the publication of the book. Although Bellarmino's and Suarez' theories vouched only for the papacy's indirect power, the claim appeared even so too substantial. Peace was reached with the cancellation of the motion against the book.

Battista Ricci between 1611-1612.[420] It would appear that Ansidei contributed in a similar manner to the program of the decorative scheme of the Archivum as well.[421] Documents attest to Ansidei's assiduous work in the running of the Archivum. First of all, he created an index for the documents held in the Archivum. In addition, he wrote a short history of the papal archives (*Breve Storia degli Archivi Papali*), the current whereabouts of which are unfortunately unknown.[422] It is impossible to known whether Ansidei's account included any reference to the fresco cycle of twenty-six donation scenes designed for the ornamentation of the rooms.

The fact that access to this space was limited had implications both for the transmission of information about the frescoes and for the choice of artists. Only occasionally was the Archivum featured in descriptions of the Vatican Palace in subsequent decades. In his *Roma ornata dell' architettura, pittura, e scoltura* (1653), Fioravante Martinelli refers to the position assumed by Ansidei as the first custodian of the Archivum. However, his silence on the decoration, as well as his incorrect statement that the Archivum occupied only two rooms, would seem to indicate that Martinelli did not have access to the Archivum.[423] The later work *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico*

[420] Giovanni Morello and Pierluigi Silvan, *Vedute di Roma: dai dipinti della Biblioteca apostolica vaticana*. (Milan: Electa, 1997), 32. The authors used a variant of Ansidei's, as Anzidei.
[421] A similar conclusion has been reached by B. Cerulli (See B. Cerulli, 111-112). However, the author sees a close thematic linkage between the cycle in the Sale Paoline of the Library and the one in the Archivum, a linkage which she counts as part of the argument for Ansidei's involvement in the Archivum. One may say that the two cycles celebrate the papacy in general, but their themes are quite dissimilar.
[422] Breve 2 dicembre 1614 stipulated fierce norms for the security of the documents which had been sorted out in an index.
[423] Fioravante Martinelli, "Roma ornata dell'architettura, pittura, e scultura," in *Roma nel Seicento*, ed. Cesare D'Onofrio (Florence: Vallecchi, 1968), 361-381.

Vaticano (1750) by Agostino Taja includes a succinct description.[424] However, other texts of various genres in which sections were dedicated to the Vatican Library do not mention the Archivum—such as the 1725 expanded edition of Ottavio Pascoli's *Roma sacra e moderna*. Even during Paul V's own time, references to the transformations at the Archivum are conspicuously laconic. In his manuscript notes on the Borghese papacy, Giovan Battista Costaguti, the *Maggiordomo* of Paul V, enumerated the Archivum project amongst Paul V's undertakings, but without providing any information on the decoration.[425]

Eulogistic works on the pontiff's architectural interventions at the Vatican Library were published only posthumously. The Polish Dominican Abraham Bzovius, the first to continue Baronius' *Annales*, took the initiative. Indebted to Paul V for his ecclesiastical career, he composed a laudatory biography of the deceased pope (*Paulus V Burghesius P.O.M.F*) but published it only at the beginning of the pontificate of Urban VIII Barberini in 1624.[426] His biography treats the Archivum in the same section as the Vatican Library. Bzovius, as a historian, approached the frescoes of the Archivum primarily through their subject-matter, particularly through a transcription of the epigraphs attached to each of the twenty-six episodes.[427]

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[424] Agostino Maria Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano* (Roma: appresso Niccolò, e Marco Paglarini, 1750), 478-487. Notably, the Archivum is absent from the list of the Pauline works presented by Giovanni Baglione in his *Le vite* (1642).

[425] Costaguti held that position at least from 1618. His notes have been selectively published by Pastor in an Appendix to the volumes dedicated to Paul V. Pastor has presumed that the notes were not meant for publication. The note on the Archives reads: "Le stanze dell'Archivum accanto alla Libreria," Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 25, 484.

[426] He contributed to the *Annales* with nine volumes—covering the period between 1198 and 1571—published in Rome between 1616 and 1672.

[427] "Bibliothecae adivinxit Archivum Apostolicum, in quo omnia monimonta secretiora Apostolicae Sedis hinc inde antea dispersa conclusit, picturisq. appositè inter arcus fornicum, quid in censu, quidue in iure Romana Ecclesia posideret, hbaretve oculis obiecit: adscripta singulis jconismis indicatione istis verbis." F.

Bzovius's text is silent regarding the names of artists who executed the decorative program, while the evidence he gives of the inscriptions certifies that that the donation scenes were indeed executed during the reign of Paul V. The entire list of artists who painted the frescoes still needs to be established. Scholars have proposed few names along with the hypothesis that less expensive artists were employed on account of the relatively unfrequented location.[428] Surviving documents include payments indicating the names of Annibale Durante, Antonio Viviani, and Giovannni Battista Calandra.[429] Even a glance at the frescoes is sufficient to allow one to realize that some portions, such as the *grotteschi* and the landscapes, were executed by accomplished painters of these specialties. Despite uncertainties, it is clear that the project involved a team of artists whose mission lay in translating visually a fundamental characteristic of the current papal political agenda in the newly founded institution of the Archivum.

While the decoration of the Sale Paoline, consisting primarily of the deeds of Paul V, is reminiscent of the Sistine rooms of the Library, there were no visual precedents for the newly instituted Archivum. The precondition imposed by the structure built to accommodate the apartment of the librarian must have appealed to Paul V as a suitable feature for the new function of the space, the institution of the Archivum. Indeed, the Archivum was conceived as a separate entity autonomous but related to the body of the Library. The Archivum was an enclosed space, delimited by the entrance door leading from the Library surmounted by the bust of Paul V set into a niche surrounded by an oval

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Abraham Bzovii Poloni S.T. Magistri Ord. Praed. Romae, *Paulus V Burghesius P.O.M.F* (Romae: Ex Typographia Stephani Paulini. 1624), 69.

[428] Elena Fumagali has proposed that the selection of artists working on the Borghese commissions at the Vatican was determined by the function of the space E. Fumagali, 1996, 341-370.

[429] The majority of these documents has been already published by B. Cirulli. See Cirulli, "Una proposta," 124-127.

stucco molding (fig. V. 3). The three contiguous rooms that received a fresco decoration are of unequal proportions. The first two rooms—leading from the Library— have comparable perimeters, whereas the third room is larger. The payment documents distinguish the rooms by calling the first two *piccole* and the third the *stantia maggiore.* [430]

The twenty-six donation scenes painted in the three rooms of the Archivum represent the principal decorations. The sequential order of the donation scenes from one room to the next does not follow a consistent chronological order. Within each chamber, however, the scenes are arranged, with one exception, in chronological order.[431] In order to behold the series in each room in a chronological order, the viewing has to begin with the scene encountered at the immediate left as the viewer enters the room. In the first room, the series unfolds chronologically from the eighth-century donation of Longobard king Aribertus to the fourteenth-century donation of Landgrave Heinrich von Essen (figs. V. 4-7). The sequence in the second room begins with the eleventh-century donation of Duke Spytihňev II of Bohemia and ends with that of the twelfth-century donation of King Afonso of Portugal (figs. V. 8-11).[432] The series in the third room opens with the fourth-century donation of Emperor Constantine the Great and concludes with the fourteenth-century donation of Emperor Charles IV, with the chronological order disturbed only once towards the end of the series (figs. V. 13-16).[433]

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[430] "A di 9 di marzo Aantonio Viviani da Urbino detto il sordo, et a Gio. batt. calandra compagni scudi cento di moneta quali si fanno pagare a bon conto della pittura che loro hanno da fare nella stantia maggiore delli Archivio della libreria del Palazzo Vaticano." ASR, Camerale I, Fabbriche, b. 1537, fol. 232 v. For *piccole*, see above n. 387.

[431] The exception appears in the third room, where the confirmation of previous donations by Henry VII in favor of Clement V (1305-1314) precedes that by the Roman King Aribertus in favor of Boniface VIII in 1303.

[432] For the whole series, see n. 393.

[433] The second and third from the last have evidently been reversed in order. See n.431.

Looking comparatively at the episodes in each room, one realizes that the first two rooms present regional donations offered by local leaders (from Bohemia, Portugal, Aragon to name a few), whereas the large room accommodates donations made by Roman emperors and kings. In this last series, in the third room, the epigraph attached to the bottom of each scene refers to another major papal prerogative often exercised by the papacy in conjunction with a donation event—the right to crown emperors. In this way, the decorative program of the Archivum not only illustrates the documentary character of the holdings of the Archivum but more importantly emphasizes a certain type of document, the donation document, accounting for its various political implications.

The fact that the third and largest of the rooms hosts what is chronologically the first donation of the whole cycle of twenty-six donation scenes, the Donation of Constantine, has led some scholars to infer that this had to be the first room of the three.[434] This conclusion, however, contradicts the evidence of eighteenth-century descriptions. I believe, instead, that the order of the rooms was conceived of in relation to the entrance to the Archivum from the Library. The *stantia maggiore* would thus have been the third room in the series, even if it may seem intriguing that the origin of the genealogy of twenty-six donation scenes, the *Donation of Constantine,* is depicted only in the third room. My interpretation is supported by the testimony of Paul V's contemporaries. Bzovius, a connoisseur of Borghese policies, described the array of donations starting with the little room adjacent to the Salone Sistino and ended with the *stantia maggiore*.

There is no doubt that the *stantia maggiore* is the most important room of the

[434] Cirulli, "Una proposta," 114.

complex. The larger room feels more imposing, not only due to its size and the fresco with the triumph of the Borghese in the central panel of the ceiling but also on account of the status of the donations depicted on the walls (fig. V. 12). The imperial donations featured in the *stantia maggiore* were more significant in status than the donations made by regional leaders illustrated on the walls of the two smaller rooms.

The whole layout of the Archivum inspires a reading of the third room comparable to that of the cella of a temple. A distinctive door signals and facilitates access to the Archivum from the Library. Approaching the door, the viewer is greeted by the portrait of the founder of the Archivum, Paul V (figs. V. 3, 6). The sequence of the rooms creates a progression leading up to the *stantia maggiore*, the most precious of the chambers, to be discovered last. The subjects depicted on the ceilings of the three rooms affirm the direction of the progression, beginning with the pagan messenger of the gods, Mercury, then a choir of angels, and concluding with the triumph of the Borghese pontiff. The first room displays momentous donations, such as Charlemagne's, that inspire awe in visitors from the beginning of their experience in the Archivum. However, it is only in the last of the three rooms that the viewer finds the imperial donations often associated with the crowning of emperors by pontiffs. It is here that the fullest elaboration of the complex issues defining papal prerogatives is presented.

While the donation scenes are thematically similar throughout the program, the ornamental features differentiate the three rooms and allude to the different status of the respective donations that they surround. Each room exhibits a distinct frame pattern for its donation scenes. The frames in the first two rooms are similar in appearance. They have a sculptural quality legible in the blank molded pattern that makes up the frame, in

the *mascherone* affixed to the top edge of the frame, and in the herms that delimit the scenes. In contrast, in the third room, color abounds in the elaborate design of the frames. In this case, the frames, along with the draperies visible in every other scene, give the impression of fictive tapestry borders. Given that the donations in the third room pertain to the category of Roman imperial donations, and that tapestry decoration was perceived as a sign of high nobility, the more complex ornamentation of the frames in the third room reflects a basic principle of the decorum of place. While the first two rooms do display noble rulers, the emperors depicted in the third room superseded them in social rank and, in the context of the Archivum, they received the highest esteem.

In spite of the fact that the approximate dates of the execution of the frescoes appear in documents and in the fresco decoration itself (fig. V. 19), the issue of who executed the frescoes remains, as mentioned above, equally nebulous. Although documents attest to the participation of Annibale Durante, Antonio Viviani, and Giovanni Battista Calandra, it is not clear what portions of the decoration each of them frescoed except for the fact that Durante worked in the *sale piccole* and Viviani and Calandra in the *stantia maggiore*. In evaluating the style and character of the painting in the Archivum, one must exclude the brushworks applied to some of the scenes in the third room later in the century, as well as the oval frescoes in feigned stucco moldings above the doors of this same room dedicated to two subsequent popes, Innocent X (1644-1655) and Alexander VII (1655-1667) (fig. V. 17, 18). [435] Questions about a unitary execution

[435] The two oval frescoes in feigned stucco moldings respect thematically the decoration executed during the reign of Paul V. The oval fresco in feigned stucco moldings of Innocent X shows a meeting between a pope and an emperor under the sign of peace (the circular temple in the background at the left of the pope), whereas in the oval fresco in feigned stucco moldings of Alexander VII, Religion crowns an emperor.

of the donation scenes emerge. The frescoing of the sections of ceiling surrounding the central panels in each room appears to have taken place within the same phase of the project. However, both the central panels of the ceiling and the donation scenes may have been finished at a different moment. Only the third room contains an inscription—PAULUS V PM AN VIII—although this date (1612-1613) could refer only to the completion of the ceiling and not to the donation scenes below.

In the event that the program devised by Ansidei had not been completed at the time of his death in 1614, the project could have been carried on by his illustrious successor Nicolò Alemanni. An erudite scholar, Alemanni would dedicate himself to covering sensitive details of the ecclesiastical history, including the Donation of Constantine.[436] Therefore, Alemanni would have been capable of advising on the presentation of the donation theme. In any case, Bzovius' listing of the donation scenes in his account of the accomplishments of Paul V attests that the pictorial program containing the present donation scenes was intended for and executed during the Borghese pontificate (1605-1621). Let us turn now to the question of what the papacy meant to communicate to posterity by means of the series of donations I have just described.

The donation scenes constitute a carefully composed program. It has already been demonstrated that there is a thematic progression from the smaller rooms to the larger room, with a (nearly) consistent internal chronology within each room. I have noted too the distinction in social status specific to the type of donation shown in each series. I will now show how two important criteria coordinate the arrangement of the donation scenes

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However, peace remains at the fore (the circular temple on which deposed banners rest). These two pontiffs provided additional cabinets for the documents (see above, n. 389).

[436] For Alemanni, see Chapter VI.

in the rooms. One criterion, more predominant, concerns the geography of the papal domains represented by the donations. The second concerns the ordering of the donation scenes in each room around a catalytic historical figure.

From the point of view of papal geography, the *stantia maggiore* presents general donations to the Church not explicitly associated with particular places. The first two rooms, in contrast, exhibit donations which entailed clear geographical borders. The donations in first room refer to Germanic, Polish, and English land, while those in the second room refer to lands in central and southern Europe. The third room, as noted above, hosts imperial donations.[437] These general donations would seem not to engage geography in a strict sense. However, the unspecified territorial domain, along with the fact that the origin of the general donations was the Donation of Constantine (which stipulated the ceding of the whole West), conferred upon the papacy the right to claim geographical areas broadly comprehended. By contrast, the first two small rooms localize on the map the lands gifted to the papacy. In the first room, one encounters donations associated with Alpes Cotias, the Exarchate of Ravenna, Poland, England, the Isle of Man, and German dioceses (Mainz, Trier, and Würzburg). In the second room, the granted territories include Bohemia, Hungary, Croatia and Dalmatia, Tuscia and Lombardy, Aragon, and Sicily. The geographical divide between these two rooms is based on a north/south partition, the first room illustrating the donation scenes that involve mostly northern parts of Europe, the second room representing south-central and southern European lands. The majority of the lands invoked in the Archivum frescoes had

[437] The depiction of the donation of a *Romanorum Rex* appears only exceptionally; it refers to the period when the seat was vacant (between Frederic II and Henry II. Boniface VIII recognized Albertus as German king but emperor only later in 1303).

been gradually lost by the papacy. Reminders about old papal possessions could have served to stimulate and persuade contemporary leaders to resolve their political conflicts with the papacy. Evocatively, for example, donations referring to dominions of Venice, France, England, and Italian regions at present under Spanish occupation, adorn the walls of the Archivum.

The evident similarities between the first two rooms in their exhibiting donations scenes of regional leaders and of precise territorial delimitations raise the possibility of considering the two as a unit. Such a possibility increases if we consider Bzovius' intriguing enumeration of the scenes in the first two rooms together as a unique series. His reading starts with the first scene at the left in the first room and goes around clockwise until he reaches the door separating the first two rooms. He then passes from the first room into the second, covers the walls of the second room, and then returns to the first room, finishing with the last scene to the right of the entrance door. While this enumeration does not work chronologically, it does work geographically. Furthermore, it would appear that the differences in the fictional frames around the donation scenes between the two *sale piccole* and the *stantia maggiore* were intentionally designed in order to call attention to the connection between the two *sale piccole*. In this way, the beholder, when moving through the *sale piccole*, would have been encouraged to draw a mental map of the lands once owned by the Holy See.

A map of old European papal possessions unfolds starting with the Longobard territories in central and northern Italy. These territories, supposedly given initially to the papacy through the Donation of Constantine, and later lost to the Longobards, were recuperated by the papacy through exceptional donations of Longobard rulers, but

primarily through the intervention of the Frankish kings Pepin and Charlemagne, whose donations are depicted in the next two scenes of the series. The map then includes Poland and continues with other territories in central Europe, Southern Europe, Northern Europe, especially England, and concludes with Germanic lands (fig. V. 2). The donation of Charlemagne was usually applauded for both the confirmation of his father Pepin's donation and for enlarging upon the territory given. In the Archivum, the donation of Charlemagne, according to the epigraph, would refer just to the confirmation of his father's donation. Therefore, according to this arrangement, Poland, which was donated to the Holy See by King Casmir I in the next scene in the sequence, would have been the first non-Italian land presented to the papacy.

The position of Poland in the room, presented as the first particular land offered to the papacy after Charlemagne's donation is intriguingly placed just to the left of Paul V's portrait as seen from the entrance door. This, along with the order of the donation scenes presented by Bzovius raises the possibility of Bzovius' involvement in the project at some point. Bzovius took over Baronius' work on the *Annales*, and many of the events illustrated on the walls of the Archivum were covered in his expanded version of the ecclesiastic history.[438] Whether or not this was the case, the order in which the donation scenes had been arranged could transpose the acts of donation represented through documents into a geographical understanding of the papal territorial possessions. In comparison with the fresco cycle in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche designed for Gregory XIII about three decades earlier (fig. III. 4), the series of the acts of donation in

[438] Although his volumes are considered inferior to those penned by Baronius, Bzovius enjoyed considerable favor at the court of Paul V.

the Archivum captures the papal fiefs through a mental rather than a physical map. As mentioned earlier (Chapter III), in the Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, maps of various regions exemplify the territories under the control of the Holy See. In the Archivum, the very locus for the preservation of the documents that permitted claims of this kind to be made, the documents themselves are the focus of attention. They serve as juridical proofs that guaranteed the possession of lands which can be grasped in their geographical physicality thanks to a carefully thought out visual presentation.

The second key feature employed in the frescoes in the Archivum is evident in the selection of a crucial figure in the tradition of the Church to organize the content of the decoration in each of the three rooms. While the importance of each donation depicted is indisputable, the donations made by extraordinary characters give additional support to the fluency of papal claims based on donations. Each of the three rooms has a hero: Charlemagne, Matilda of Canossa, and Constantine (figs. V. 23-25). Charlemagne is featured in the first room upon entering the Archivum. One might assume that the episode with Charlemagne would have to be in the third room, with the general donations of emperors. However, at the time of the confirmation of his donation to Pope Adrian I (772-795), Charlemagne was not an emperor; he was identified as a *Francorum Rex*. Therefore, his exclusion from the third room seems justifiable if one takes into account that it was the status of the donor at the moment of donation, as emperor or Roman king, that was the standard of differentiating the donations in the three separate rooms. At the same time, the identification of Charlemagne as a *Francorum Rex* could have helped the papacy to alert contemporary French kings to the importance of the donation phenomenon. As we have seen, the relations between Rome and Paris were rather tense in

the period in which the frescoes were painted. In no way arbitrary is the fact that the Donation of Charlemagne is modeled after the episode capturing the act of donation of the famous Constantine (fig. V. 25). In both scenes, the action unfolds at the altar of St. Peter in his most revered Catholic church. The emperors appear as the equals of their contemporary pontiffs, to whom they hand over the documents of their donations. In contrast, Matilda of Canossa, in her donation scene (fig. V. 24), while standing to the left of the pope, points towards a mediator who reads aloud to Pope Gregory VII the content of the Countess' donation. Matilda had assumed her important role for the papacy due both to her donation and to her mediation in 1077 for Emperor Henry IV's *proskynesis* before Pope Gregory VII during the "Investiture Controversy."[439] The placement of the episode with her act of donation on the wall right preceding the *stantia maggiore*, which hosts the imperial donations, prepares the beholder for the intricacies of the last room. Here, in the *stantia maggiore*, the first scene of the chronological series is the Donation of Constantine (fig. V. 25). This scene embodies the origin and paradigm of donations in favor of the Church and of the complicated negotiation of power between the papacy and emperors.

The Donation of Constantine *fresco*

Heroes are seductive figures, and those associated with myths of origins are particularly captivating. The charisma of Constantine still stirred interest owing to the primacy of his act of donation. Placed at the beginning of the series of imperial donations

[439] The well-known “Investiture Controversy” (or “Contest”) has generated a vast literature. It is worth noting that currently, due to the complexity of the issue, scholars tend to refer to it in quotation marks. There was a fresco depicting Matilda's mediation at Canossa in the Sala Regia.

in the third room, the *Donation of Constantine* (figs. V. 25, 26) shows Emperor Constantine handing to Pope Sylvester I the folded and sealed document of the donation. The document is being presented in the manner in which it would have been preserved in the Archivum. As in the rest of the fresco cycle of the twenty-six donation scenes, the document of the donation appears as the object of donation. Also consistent throughout the twenty-six donation scenes is the exclusion from the visual narrative of the neutral contemporary observers of the acts of donation. In earlier renditions of the donation theme, observers played the role of the witnesses. Here, in spite of the fact that the Donation of Constantine is staged in the proximity of the public altar of St. Peter, the fresco gives the impression that the donation took place in private, with only the imperial and ecclesiastical attendants granted permission to assist. This atmosphere of events occurring as if within impenetrable walls, almost in secrecy, resonates with the function of the Archivum. It also embodies the idea that the ins and outs of such events cannot be known to everyone.

Visual representations of the Donation of Constantine could still enrich the debate over the authenticity of the document of the Donation. In the frescoes of the Archivum, the document of a donation emerged consistently as the clarifying element in conveying the message of what a donation involved. As discussed in Chapter III, designating the *document* of the donation as the *object of donation* had appealed to Sixtus V, for whom two *Donation of Constantine* scenes had been frescoed at the Lateran. While the *Donation of Constantine* in the Archivum took into consideration the physical document as a confirmation of the validity of the disputed text, it also explored the theme beyond the Sistine prescription. Indeed, the document, displayed in the center of the composition,

attracts the eye of the beholder in the vacuum bracketed by Constantine and Sylvester. Crucial details were incorporated in order to eliminate any confusion regarding the Constantinian donation: the imperial attendants in the proximity of the emperor carry forward the tiara and the red imperial cloak.

While the *Donation* in the Archivum engaged with the version prescribed during the Sistine period (fig. IV. 29, 29a, 35), one may ask why this previous version was not sufficient per se or why it may have been regarded as confusing. In order to answer these questions, another detail must be taken into account. The inscription that accompanies the *Donation* in the Archivum reads: "SILVESTRO I PONT MAX CONSTANTINUS MAGNUS IMP ROMANAM ECCL INGENTIBUS DONIS LOCUPLETAT PONTIFICI VARIA ORNAMENTA LARGITUR." The epigraph lauds the innumerable and rich gifts made by Constantine without specifying of what they consisted. The statement in the epigraph reflects the environment of doubt regarding the Donation cultivated by Baronius and those who shared his opinion. As we have learned, Paul V himself was affected by the historian's ideas in his decision to promulgate a new bull addressing the veracity of the document, but he never advanced a case against the Donation. The relation of word and image in the Archivum fresco combines the doubt suggested by a vaguely worded epigraph with the certitude communicated through an image that vouches not only for the existence of the physical document but also for the particular regalia of the donation, such as the tiara and the imperial cloak—signifiers of papal prerogatives. Dissimulation is at play in the word-image unit: while the epigraph voices a vaguer claim, the image offers no equivocation.

At the beginning of the Borghese pontificate, the Donation of Constantine

continued to stimulate debate at the papal court, a situation the pope wished to curb. The pope's belief in the authenticity of the Donation had been shaken enough to make him abort his original intention of issuing of a bull affirming its validity, but not enough to make him abandon the Donation altogether. No representation of the Donation was commissioned by Paul V for a public space like Sixtus V's frescoes for the Benediction Loggia or Clement VIII's fresco for the transept of the Lateran Basilica. Nevertheless, as we have seen, a depiction of an expanded explanation of the Donation of Constantine was designed for the newly founded and little-accessible Archivum Vaticanum. The image of the Donation painted there defends the authenticity of the Donation against the epigraph that accompanies it and is supported by the whole array of subsequent imperial and seigniorial donations for which it stands as origin and model. The post-Constantine donations implied a retrospective approval of previous donations. The descending line of genealogical donations stopped always at the same "point zero": the Donation of Constantine. In the Archivum, the Donation of Constantine, already featured once, reverberates in the rest of the series through the emulative gesture of different subsequent leaders.

Paul V applied himself to preserving the prerogatives of the Church from the beginning of his pontificate. Despite the re-affiliation of France to the Catholic cause with the conversion of Henry IV Navarra in 1594, questions about the extent of papal prerogatives proliferated amongst political theorists in France. At the same time, the Protestant English King James I vehemently attacked the papacy following any attempt by the pope to assert his authority over the king's subjects. In addition, the Borghese pontificate began under inauspicious conditions in its relationship with Venice. The

general conflict between the papacy and Venice reached legendary dimensions in popular memory. In his collection of *Curiosità Romane* (1885), Costantino Maes noted an anecdote of an uncertain date about the encounter between Julius II and a Venetian ambassador in the early 1500's, during which the pope asked the Venetian diplomat what kind of authority Venice could have had over the Adriatic Sea.[440] The witty reply of the ambassador epitomizes the central role of the donations for the papacy: "Your Holiness will find the answer on the verso of the document of the Donation of Constantine referring to Constantine's donation of the city of Rome to you [the papacy]."[441] A century after this memorable meeting, Paul V's endeavor to maintain the papacy as a crucial political power triggered, besides the glorification of his own pontificate and of the papacy in general, a process of justifying historically its political prerogatives. In the concluding line of his account of the Archivum, Bzovius noted how important the Christian rulers were for engendering these memorable acts in behalf of the Church. Evidently, they could not be so without their counterparts, the pontiffs.[442] The displacement of the center of importance from the papacy to the secular rulers signaled not humility *ipso facto*, but the mediation of power. The frescoes in the Archivum constitute a special visual dossier by which the Church could justify its rights and claims, whenever it was considered necessary.

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[440] The name of the ambassador is not mentioned. Costantino Maes, *Curiosità Romane* (Rome: Perino, 1885), Parte 1, 18. However, it seems that the anecdote may have had origins in palpable historical evidence, such as the witticism of the Venetian ambassador Girolamo Donato. In his conversation with Julius II's immediate predecessor, Alexander VI (1492-1503), Donato said to the pontiff: "mi mostri Vostra Santità la donazione del patrimonio di San Pietro e sul retro troverà la concessione dei Veneti del mare Adriatico." For Donato and Alexander VI, see Paolo Prodi, *Il Sovrano*, 31-32.

[441] "Vostra Santità lo troverà scritto sul rovescio della carta di donazione, che Costantino vi ha fatto della città di Roma." Maes, Ibid.

[442] "Et quidem ista Paulus Quintus memoriae superiorum Pontificum, ac pietate Imperatorum, Regnum, ac Principum Christianorum consecravit." F. Abraham Bzovii Poloni, 1624, 71.

Alexander VII and Bernini's Statue of Constantine

Donation scenes continued to be of interest to Paul V's successors, both as important polemical tools asserting papal authority and as a means for calling attention to seminal historical figures connected to the donation tradition. In the short pontificate of Gregory XV (1621-1623) that followed that of Paul V, no new donation scene was commissioned. Subsequently, Urban VIII commissioned for the Vatican a Sala di Matilda and a Sala di Carlomagno, as well as a new staircase for accessing the Sala di Costantino. The former hall hosts the *Donation of Countess Matilda,* whereas the latter displays *Charlemagne Confirming the Donation of his Father King Pepin*. The Sala di Carlomagno, which acts as an anti-chamber to the papal apartments, exhibits a few Constantinian episodes as well. Because of the general limited access to these spaces I will confine myself here to a few notes on these projects.

The information that I have at my disposal, thanks to secondary sources, allows me to point out Urban VIII's vivid investment in these three major donors and defenders of the Church. The hall dedicated to each of them displays the donation of the respective benefactor. One may speculate that the three halls promoted a genealogy of donations through the donation acts of the three rulers. Unlike the first example of a visual genealogy of donations considered in this chapter, in the Archivum, where the cycle occupied three connecting rooms, in this case the three halls, two of which were commissioned by Urban VIII himself, thematically brought together spaces that were not physically contiguous.

The idea of expanding a genealogy of donations beyond the confines of

interconnected rooms seems to have appealed to later generations when dealing with thematically similar imagery, especially Constantinian imagery. With this in mind, we can leave the papacy of Urban VIII for the moment and turn to examining another commission of Constantinian imagery in the same palace, the equestrian statue of Constantine by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (fig. V. 39).

Many visitors today to the public spaces of the Vatican may easily leave the premises without having had even a quick look, from a distance, at one of Bernini's monumental works for the complex: the statue of *Constantine* (fig. V. 31). While Bernini's Colonnade in the Vatican Piazza, and his *Baldachin* and *Cathedra Petri* inside the basilica, are all conspicuous to the visitor's eye, the statue of *Constantine* remains on the margins of a typical tour of the Vatican. Situated at the intersection between the narthex of St. Peter's and the axis that runs through the corridor (Braccio Costantino) and the palace staircase known as, the Scala Regia (fig.V. 36), Bernini's Constantine is nowadays separated from the narthex by heavy glass doors (fig.V. 32). To the attentive viewer who happens to notice it, the equestrian relief statue of the Emperor Constantine on a pedestal, virtually a memorial statue of grandiose scale, is most impressive. Even one who does notice it may not be able to see all the details of the work designed by Bernini (fig. V. 32). The tent from which a rich drapery hangs and the light-blue painted background may encourage the viewer to situate the *Constantine* in a narrative context. If we are to compare the view captured in engravings of the statue that were made in past centuries with a present perpendicular view from the narthex, it seems that nothing substantial was excluded from the engravings. Neither would those who have had access to the statue have been able to see secondary details unless they had been in close

proximity. Confronted by the statue from close up, one can see an important detail that is invisible from a distance and from certain angles: Constantine's gaze is directed towards a cross and a banderole with the motto "IN HOC SIGNE VINCES" affixed on the wall towards the Braccio Costantino (figs. V. 31, 33a). Only then does the beholder realize that the statute is not merely a memorial to the first Christian emperor but a narrative presentation that captures the very moment in which Constantine experiences the vision of the Cross. The agitated pose of the rearing horse and the upward movement of Constantine's head represent responses to the heavenly apparition. However, the fact that the statue could also function as a memorial statue *per se* requires our attention.

The commission of the statue of Constantine from Bernini materialized as part of Innocent X's intention to complete the internal decoration of St. Peter's during his pontificate (1644-1655), but the inauguration of the statue took place three pontificates later in 1670. There is consensus among scholars regarding the three major details of the *Constantine*: the pope who commissioned first a statue of Constantine from Bernini, the pope who decided for its present location, and the inauguration date.[443] It all started when Innocent X commissioned from Bernini a statue of Constantine for St. Peter's. The first recorded payment for the work dates from 1654. Initially, the location of the statue was envisioned inside the basilica, and as some scholars have proposed, as a pendant to the funerary monument of Countess Matilda of Canossa.[444] If this was the case, since the

[443] The existing documents related to this commission were thoroughly studied for the first time by Tod A. Marder. See Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 165-179.
[444] For more details see Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 167, 284, n.10; Damian Dombrowski, *Dal trionfo all'amore: il mutevole pensiero artistico di Gianlorenzo Bernini nella decorazione del nuovo San Pietro* (Rome: Argos, 2003), 102. In addition, Marder has hypothesized that the *Constantine* was intended for St. Peter's in competition with Algardi's marble altarpiece for the same basilica (*Meeting of Leo the Great and Attila*). See Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 190.

monument in honor of Countess Matilda was also the work of Bernini (who had designed it for Urban VIII in 1636), the pairing of Constantine and Matilda would have displayed a parallel not only in the deeds of the two but also in the artistic qualities exhibited in the sculptures.[445] Domenico Bernini, the artist's son and biographer, notes that the statue of Constantine was only in the preliminary design stages under Innocent X, for which reason he described the statue in the sections dedicated to the pontificate of Alexander VII.[446] However, as scholars agree, Domenico wrongly assumed that his father had finished the work before the summer of 1662, when first Alexander VII and then Christine of Sweden had paid a visit to his studio.[447] The archival material discovered by Tod Marder offers a more accurate account on Bernini's progress on the *Constantine*. According to the payments recorded in the archives of the Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro, Bernini could not have started sculpting the statue before the end of 1655, when he received the stone, months after the death of Innocent X in January that year.[448] At the same time, these documents attest to Alexander VII's involvement in the *Constantine* since the beginning of his pontificate in April 1655. Alexander did not live long enough to see the statue installed in its intended location. The statue must have been mostly finished when it was transferred from Bernini's studio to the Vatican in January of 1669 during the reign of Clement IX.[449] However, it was the next pope, Clement X, who had

[445] Constantine and Matilda appear very closely to each other in the Archivum as well. Although their acts of donations are depicted in different rooms, they are on the same portion of the wall that separates the second room from the third.
[446] Domenico Bernini, *The Life of Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, trans. and ed. Franco Mormando (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 166.
[447] Domenico Bernini, Ibid., 93.
[448] Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia*, 167.
[449] Bernini showed the statue to Clement IX in July 1668, the date which is considered proof for the completion of the statue. However, as we have seen, Alexander VII had visited the artist in his studio in order to evaluate his progress on the statue before its completion. At the same time, the documents attest to

the honor of inaugurating it significantly on November 1, 1670, the anniversary of Constantine's victory over Maxentius, as several contemporary sources recorded.[450]

Even though the statue received a favorable critique from Bernini's supporters, including Padre Giovanni Paolo Oliva, the General of the Jesuits, who advertised the *Constantine* as a "statua d'infinito valore" during Bernini's lifetime, the *Constantine* did not bring much fame to the artist.[451] An *avviso* of the period recorded that the *Constantine* was *pocco applaudito*.[452] A few decades later, Domenico Bernini tried to correct the subdued reception of the statue by commenting on what he considered to be its great artistic qualities in relation to its subject-matter, its site, and its material.[453] Moreover, he recorded details of the visits of Alexander VII and Queen Christina of Sweden, the famous convert from Protestantism to Catholicism, to the artist's workshop in such a way as to put the *Constantine* in a favorable light.[454] A severely negative

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the fact that Bernini was still working on the statue in situ before its inauguration. Although it is hard to identify how much he adjusted the *Constantine* in situ, the inauguration date is probably the more precise date for the completion of the work.

[450]Anna Gramiccia ed., *Bernini in Vaticano* (Rome: De Luca, 1981), 144. For the documents see Marder, *Scala Regia*, 179, n. 83,84; 288.

[451] Padre Oliva, *Prediche*, III, 283; quoted in Alessandro Angelini, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini e i Chigi tra Roma e Siena*, ed. Tomaso Montanari (Siena: Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1998), 322.

[452] For the avviso, see Domenico Bernini, *The Life*, 30. Nevertheless, the poor reception of his statue was not the only occasion on which events linked to the *Constantine* upset the artist. Not long before the inauguration of the statue, Luigi Bernini, the artist's brother and collaborator, was accused of an act of sodomy performed in the very proximity of the *Constantine*. Luigi's behavior cost Bernini considerably. In exchange for his brother's safety, the artist had to make a series of works for Pope Clement X without receiving payment. Fagiollo dell'Arco, 2002, 79; in Domenico Bernini, Ibid., 32.

[453] Domenico Bernini, Ibid., 177.

[454] Scholars have considered Domenico's note that Bernini finished the statue of *Constantine* before Alexander VII's visit in the summer of 1662 as a mere mistake. However, I think that Domenico may have fabricated the story consciously in order to save his father's reputation. The chronology of the facts according to Domenico would imply the approval of the work by the pontiff, which guaranteed the quality of the statue and defended Bernini against his detractors. Domenico's favorable comments on the *Constantine* practically form the conclusion of the story of Alexander VII's visit to his studio. Similarly, Maarten Delbeke, Evonne Levy, and Steven F. Ostrow, when discussing Domenico's and Badinucci's presentation of the entry of Queen Christina of Sweden in Rome right after the Scala Regia complex, have pointed out that their biographies of Bernini "should be read as creative interpretations" that allowed the

critique of the *Constantine*, and of the Berninian oeuvre in general, comes to us under the title *Discorso critico sul Costantino messo alla Berlina, ovvero Bernina su la Porta di San Pietro*.[455] Internal information would date the pamphlet after 1725, more precisely after the placement of the statue of *Charlemagne* (fig. V. 35) as a pendant to the Constantine. However, it is plausible that the pamphleteer of this *Discorso* recycled earlier criticism.[456] In the detractors' eyes, many flaws prevailed, from the doubtful quality of the stone to the expression of the facial features. The colossal size made a powerful impression on contemporaries regardless of their opinion of the statue. However, the *Constantine* was not the first Berninian *colosso*.[457] Baldinucci called the *Longinus* for St. Peter's a *colosso* as well. Bernini conceived of the *Constantine*, as he had the *Longinus*, in relation to the proportions of St. Peter's. The grandiose dimensions of the basilica inspired Kant to cite the monument, along with the Egyptian pyramids, in his discussion of the sublime as an example for the bewilderment of the beholder in front of colossal works.[458] According to Kant, the inadequacy of the colossal is due to the fact that "the end of the presentation of a concept is made more difficult if the intuition of the

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authors to project a certain desired meaning. Maarten Delbeke, Evonne A. Levy, and Steven F. Ostrow, *Bernini's biographies: critical essays* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 48.

[455] Personally, I have identified the pamphlet in two manuscripts. (Chigi I.VII. 270; Barberini Lat. 4331). Previtale has published fragments of the pamphlet (which have been translated into English by George C. Bauer). Besides the pamphlet, I call attention to a response to it preserved in the same Chigi manuscript. Giovanni Previtali, "Il Costantino messo alla Berlina ò Bernina sulla porta di San Pietro," *Paragone/Arte*, 13, no. 145 (1962): 55-58; Bauer, George C. *Bernini in Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 46-53.

[456] There are positive remarks on Algardi, Bernini's principal competitor in sculpture. However, the pamphleteer was wrong in thinking that Alexander VII could have used Algardi as a better alternative. Fabio Chigi became a pontiff in 1655, only after Algardi's death in 1654.

[457] Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita del cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernino: scultore, architetto, e pittore* (Firenze: nella Stamperia di Vincenzio Vangelisti, 1682), 61.

[458] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 135-137.

object is almost too great for our faculty of apprehension."[459] Whether because of the size of the sculpture or not, the *Constantine* failed to become a landmark of Bernini's oeuvre in spite of the artist's ambition to push the technique of a relief sculpture.

Scholars have integrated the *Constantine* not only into the broad discussion of Bernini's oeuvre and on the Baroque in general but also into reflections on particular themes of the Baroque, such as theatricality and the interest in physiognomy.[460] The statue has also received attention in connection with the Scala Regia project and with the tradition of Constantinian imagery.[461] The present chapter acknowledges the context of Constantinian imagery but at the same time delves into unearthing the potential employment of the Constantine as part of the donation phenomenon. In considering the location of the statue, I contend that the Constantine was purposefully inserted within a genealogy of donations, serving as the celebrated origin of the donation tradition. The chapter also shows that the location of the statue resonates with opinions of contemporary clergymen who expressed their views about the installment of monuments dedicated to secular leaders in the proximity of churches. We begin by establishing when the location of the Constantine was determined.

Although Bernini's effort on the Constantine extended over four pontificates, the conception of its current appearance is datable to the reign of Alexander VII. While information is scarce with regard to when the decision to install the statue at its present

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[459] Kant, Ibid. 136.
[460] Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: regista del barocco* (Milan: Skira, 1999), 74; Avigdor W. G. Posèq, "On Physiognomic Communication in Bernini," *Artibus et Historiae* 27, no. 54 (2006), 161-190. For a new perspective on the usage of the *teatro* in the Baroque, but without any reference to the *Constantine*, see Genevive Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).
[461] See Tod A. Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998); Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 1997.

location was taken, a note written by the pontiff and dated 13 July, 1664 establishes that the decision had been made prior to that day.[462] As is well known, the statue of *Constantine* was not the only undertaking initiated by Alexander at the Vatican, nor was it the only undertaking that involved Bernini. The major collaborations of the pontiff and the artist focused on the systematization of the Vatican Piazza and of the palace entrance from the piazza. The Colonnade of the piazza, the connector between the piazza and the palace—the so-called Braccio Costantino—and the Scala Regia of the palace are landmarks of their collaboration. In terms of the scale of these architectural interventions orchestrated by Alexander with Bernini's help, the *Constantine,* although described by contemporaries as a *colosso,* emerges as a just one detail of the Scala Regia project. Bernini's statue of Constantine, while subordinated to the Scala Regia project, played a crucial role in the scheme. The functionality of the Scala Regia lies in facilitating access to the palace, from the base landing of the staircase, reachable either through the narthex of the basilica or through the Braccio Constantino, to the important Sala Regia. A second route of accesses was opened up through the two doors inserted on either side of the tall pedestal of the *Constantine,* leading to the Scala di Costantino that runs up to the palace as well, if less ceremoniously (fig.V. 36).

The whole volumetric shape defined by the intersection between the narthex and the Braccio Costantino-Scala Regia, and where the Constantine was installed, is distinguished as a place dedicated to Constantine. Besides the *Constantine* and the cross

[462] "con l'Allatio e col Favoriti, poi col Bernino per render la scala dal cortiletto in S. Pietro con due bocche, ove è la statua e, dove sarà messo il Constantino." The note has been quoted by different scholars. Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 266, n. 50. Marder proposes December 1662 as a *terminus post quem*. Another proof for Alexander as the commissioner of the *Constantine* would be evident in Clement IX's refusal to be honored in an inscription on the pedestal of the statue right before its inauguration. Clement IX would have attributed the project to Alexander VII. See Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 175.

with the banderole, two stucco medallions dedicated to Constantinian deeds adorn the ceiling above the statue (fig. V. 34, 35). The medallion directly in line with the statue shows the *Baptism of Constantine*, whereas the one oriented towards the basilica depicts an episode related to the history of St. Peter's, namely its foundation by Constantine. The short series of episodes chosen for this space has a special significance that accords with the location equally well chosen by the pontiff. It is important to understand that this space embellished with Constantinian imagery was conceived as a station along the route to and from the Sala Regia. This hall was used at this time by the pope to receive heads of state, ambassadors, and other important visitors to the Vatican. It is therefore useful to look at the current political struggle of the papacy in order to explore the intended effects of having Bernini's *Constantine* installed in this place.

Alexander VII inherited a political situation whose roots could be traced back to the papacy of Paul V. The Thirty Years War, ignited in 1618 and eventually involving all major European political players, concluded in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, a treaty that marginalized the role of the papacy on the political stage by ignoring its demands. Alexander himself, as Fabio Chigi, had been the representative of the papacy at Westphalia, and refused to submit to the conditions imposed under the treaty.[463] The offence was too obvious to be condoned by the papacy in the future. In his contemporary biography of Alexander VII, Cardinal Pietro Sforza Pallavicino, a close collaborator of the pontiff, emphasized that Fabio Chigi's choice of the pontifical name Alexander was

[463] Vian, *La donazione*, 173: Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 30-31. Gianvittorio Signorotto considers that the Peace of Westphalia did not have a profound negative impact on papal power. Instead, the author draws attention the papacy's expansion in the spiritual realm through conversion of newly discovered lands. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, ed., *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For my similar supposition, but already in the context of the papacy of Urban VIII, see Chapter VI.

motivated by his will to emulate his predecessor and Siennese compatriot, Alexander III, due to the latter's "successful defense of the papal dignity against the major potentates." [464] Once a pope, Alexander VII intended to adopt such a tenet, but his task could not have been easy. Cardinal Mazarin, who had opposed the ascension of Fabio Chigi to the pontifical throne, decided to put an end to the differences between France and Spain through a new peace treaty. If the Westphalia affair marginalized the papacy, this new treaty, the Peace of the Pyrenees, concluded in November 7th, 1659, excluded it entirely. No papal representative was even invited to the negotiations. Nor did Alexander's nightmares with French politics cease with the death of Cardinal Mazarin in 1661. Rather, the situation became even more acute with the transfer of of power in France to the young and ambitious Louis XIV. The increasing dissention between the papacy and the French crown led to Louis XIV's annexation of Avignon to France and to a potential French invasion of the Papal States.[465] Alexander felt compelled to sign a humiliating peace with Louis XIV at Pisa in 1664, necessitated by the imminent Turkish threat. Indeed, since the dawn of Alexander's pontificate, the "Turkish peril" had increased. Despite the intense state of fear it created, it brought Alexander a victory in the form of a better relationship between the papacy and Venice. In exchange for papal help in the fight against the Turks in the Mediterranean Sea, Alexander obtained a reversal of the decision regarding the expulsion of the Jesuits taken in 1605 during the reign of Paul V.[466]

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[464] "…felice difesa della dignita pontificia contro I maggiori potentate della terra." Quoted in Vian, *La donazione,* 174.

[465] The pretext of the dissentions was based on the famous Créqui affair (the street brawl between the pope's Corsican guards and those of the French ambassador Créqui on August 20, 1662; the Corsicans fired over the ambassador's residence, the Palazzo Farnese, and killed a page). Consequently, the diplomatic relationships between the two were frozen for almost two years, until May 31, 1664.

[466] Initially, the ban was lifted for three years. See Pastor, *The History of the Popes,* 85-87.

However, the "Turkish threat" interested all of Europe, and most of all Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, whose territory was the closest geographically to Buda where the Turks had already advanced. While the fear of Turkish conquest was a common concern for the Catholic monarchs and the pope, the dissentions among different parties inevitably persisted. Furthermore, the alliances amongst the potentates made the papacy aware of its minimization as a political power. In light of these events, Palavicino's explanation of Alexander's name appears not only carefully chosen but also providential due to the complicated relationships of the pontiff with the potentates of the day.

One could say that the neglect of the papacy in major political negotiations amongst Catholic monarchs motivated Alexander VII to consolidate Rome as a locus of power through complex architectural transformations. Alexander enjoyed architecture and drawing, and was himself a dilettante architect. The pontiff envisioned grandiose changes within the city of Rome from early on in his pontificate. Contemporary chronicles inform us that the pope had in his room a wooden model of Rome in order to help him visualize the great interventions that the city required.[467]

When he ascended to the pontifical throne, Alexander VII had the versatile and well-established artist Bernini conveniently at his disposal. The architectural improvements for the city of Rome projected by Alexander VII were not limited to the Vatican area but covered other major projects such as the systematization of the Piazza del Popolo. Bernini was the main architect of these transformations.[468] The diary of Alexander VII attests to a very close collaboration between the pontiff and the artist, with

[467] See Giovanni Morelli, *Intorno a Bernini. Studi e documenti* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2007), 130.
[468] See Richard Krautheimer, *Roma Alessandrina: The Remapping of Rome Under Alexander VII, 1655-1667* (Poughkeepsie: Vassar College, 1982); Richard Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Alessandro Angelini, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, 129-185.

almost daily conversations between the two regarding projects that were in progress and planned for the future.[469] During one of these meetings, the pope made an interesting remark to his maestro while thinking about the conceit for the Colonnade of the Piazza San Pietro. He told Bernini that he should plan the *Teatro* of St. Peter's as if to embrace Catholics, to make heretics return to Catholicism, and to help infidels understand which was the true religion. [470] This remark demonstrates the pontiff's understanding of how architecture and space could be used to advance a Catholic agenda in a very dynamic way. Such a deep understanding of architecture as a tool of creating meaning through space reflects rather than a solitary idea of the pontiff a mode of thinking inherent to the pope's approach into all of his projects.

The *Constantine* involved an elaborate conceptual process. A diagram in Alexander's own hand is revealing about both this process and the underlying conception. The diagram shows a triangular conceit labeled at the top "MΞTΛMOPφωCIC" (fig.V. 40). This word is situated at the apex of triangular diagram. Immediately below is the word "PETRI," with a line extending diagonally to the left linking it with the word "CMAGNI" (Charlemagne), while a line to the right, connects "PETRI" with the word "CONSTANT" (Constantine). Alexander's scheme compellingly attests to the fact that a statue of Charlemagne was intended from the time of his pontificate, although in the end the work was commissioned from Agostino Cornacchini considerably afterwards in 1720,

[469] For the diary, see R. Krautheimer and Roger B. Jones, *The Diary of Alexander VII. Notes on Art, Artists and Buildings* (Tubingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1975).
[470] "dimostrasse di ricevere maternamente i cattolici per confermarli nella credenza, gli eretici per riunirli alla Chiesa, gli infideli per illuminarli alla vera fede." In Giovanni Morelli, *Intorno a Bernini*, 2.

and unveiled five years later (fig. V. 35).[471] Alexander's diagram has been interpreted as reflecting the intended physical position of the two equestrian statues at St. Peter's.[472] However, no satisfactory explanation for what "Metamorphosis Petri" may refer to has been suggested. The expression has rather been taken implicitly as a reference for St. Peter's. Nevertheless, Damian Dombrowski has proposed that the three terms most probably allude to three sculptural works, and thus the reference to Peter may indicate the scene of the *Pasce oves mea* over the entrance door of the Basilica (fig. V. 41). The *Pasce oves mea* ("Feed my sheep") is another Berninian sculpture installed in its present location, above the central door of the basilica, in 1649.[473] While I am inclined to believe that, indeed, the reference to Peter is inclusive of the *Pasce oves mea*, I do not see that it need be restricted to an artistic medium, in this case sculpture, in order to foster a plurality of associations amongst the decorative panels and the equestrian statues in the portico. However, it is true that before the inclusion of the much-restored mosaic of Giotto's *Navicella* on the opposite wall of the portico in the early 1670's, sculptural decoration—in particular stucco—was the medium used for the figurative episodes of the portico.[474] "Metamorphosis" permits multiple interpretations. In a very strict sense, in the

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[471] Some scholars consider the addition of a Chigi coat-of-arms on the side of the narthex where the Charlemagne was located as another proof that Alexander VII seriously considered incorporating a statue of Charlemagne on the opposite side of the narthex in relation to the Constantine. In addition, Alexander VII may have found inspiration in the unaccomplished project of Clement VII who had commissioned from Guiglielmo della Porta equestrian statues of Carol V and Francis I to be placed in front of the portico of St. Peter's. For these details and further bibliography on the topic, see Damian Dombrowski, *Dal trionfo all'amore,* 102.

[472] Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia,* 207.

[473] See Georges C. Bauer, "Bernini's "*Pasce oves meas' and the Entrance Wall of St. Peter's,*" *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 63, 1 (2000): 15-25.

[474] When Paul V Borghese invested himself in concluding the construction works at St. Peter's, he also commissioned a stucco cycle for the new narthex of the basilica. The *Navicula Petri* had a long history at St. Peter's, more precisely began with Giotto's rendition of the subject-matter. Giotto's mosaic panel had been subsequently moved to different locations. See Helmtrud Kȯhren-Jansen, *Giottos Navicella: Bildtradition, Deutung, Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Worms am Rhein: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993).

Christian context, metamorphosis is the Greek word corresponding to the scene of the Transfiguration of Christ, an epiphany to which St. Peter himself was a witness. The scene of the *Transfiguration* is, in fact, part of the cycle in the portico of St. Peter's, located directly to the north side of the *Pasce oves mea.* Alexander may also have been thinking about a scene involving the metamorphosis of Peter witnessed by Constantine and Charlemagne. But Alexander may have had a more intricate conception in mind.

In the diagram, there is an intriguing rhomboid shape drawn above the word "Metamorphosis" which requires attention and must be taken into the equation. As we have seen, geometry earlier had stimulated the pontiff when he had asked for a certain type of plan for the Piazza San Pietro. In the drawing under scrutiny, the rhombus may be related to the triangle Peter—Constantine—Charlemagne. A rhombus is made up of two equal triangles. The mirroring effect of this geometrical figure entices once to hypothesize about a doubling of the triangle sketched by Alexander, thus about a rhombus with two points of "metamorphosis Petri." One of these points would reside in the *Pasce oves mea* in the portico of the Basilica, and one in *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (fig. V. 42), a panel on the facade of the Basilica above the central entrance to the portico. *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* was commissioned by Paul V from Ambrogio Bonvicino and installed on the facade during his pontificate. Both episodes advertise the *primatus Petri* and were, in Alexander's time, an established papal iconography that the pontiff could exploit. Also preexistent was the program of the portico ceiling. This consists of episodes from the life of St. Peter and of a series of sculptures of ancient popes. Thinking about the rhombus in space helps to open up connections not only with *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* but also with the whole Petrine stucco cycle from the

portico. While it is hard to pinpoint a metamorphosis of Peter in relation to a single narrative scene, a cycle in its entirety could afford many metaphorical resonances with the word metamorphosis. Furthermore, the cycle includes one of the post-mortem apparitions of St. Peter in *Constantine's Vision of SS. Peter and Paul* (fig. V. 43). This scene in the portico cycle, representing the metamorphosis that Constantine would undergo through his visionary experience of SS. Peter and Paul, thus anticipated Alexander's later commission of the *Constantin*e, representing the metamorphosis of Constantine as a result of his Vision of the Cross. Equally, Alexander's usage of the word metamorphosis may have resulted from its capability to act as a common denominator for the transformative experiences of all three protagonists: the metamorphosis of St. Peter, the metamorphosis of Constantine, and the metamorphosis of Charlemagne. Just as in Peter's case, Constantine's path towards Christ meant conversion followed by fervent service to Christ. Although Charlemagne was born to a Christian father, the Frankish king Pepin, it was his deeds in support of the Church that transformed him into a truly Christian leader—his military defense of the papacy and his confirmation and enlargement upon his father's donation of lands to the Church.

The drawing thus shows not only that symmetry played a significant role in designing the project involving the *Constantine* in relation to the basilica, but also, very crucially, that the arrangement in space of decorative pieces of any sort was carefully orchestrated by Alexander VII. It is clear that when Bernini's Constantine came to inhabit the space defined by the intersection between the narthex of the basilica and the palace, Alexander VII had been carefully considering the connection between the *Constantine* and existing decorations in the Vatican Palace. However, before investigating this

network of images within the palace, in which the *Constantine* was inserted, it is important to understand first the potential valences of the subject matter embedded in the *Constantine* itself. This analysis will, in turn, serve to elucidate how certain aspects of this network of inter-connected imagery functioned.

Although Constantine astride his horse during the Vision of the Cross was not a novel detail in the iconography of the theme, Bernini's careful consideration of a larger corpus of Constantinian imagery must not be excluded. The Constantinian cycles in the Sala delle Carte Geografiche and the Benediction Loggia at the Lateran presented precedents for this rendition of the story (fig. III. 4a; IV. 33).[475] In Bernini's case, the immediate source for an equestrian statue has been identified in the antique bronze statue of *Marcus Aurelius*, already on the Capitoline Hill in the seventeenth century but famously known in the Middle Ages as *Cabalus Constantini*.[476] However famous this statue had been throughout the centuries, other imposing public statues of Constantine made during the emperor's time could have nourished the conceit devised by the pontiff and the artist for the new sculpture. Ancient sources, beginning with Eusebius, mention the erection of a celebratory statue of Constantine holding a cross ordered by the emperor himself for the city of Rome.[477] Although long vanished by the seventeenth century, the statue of Constantine holding the cross continued to be invoked as an exemplum for the utility of images of rulers in the service of the Church and sacred art. In treatises on the

[475] The novelty would be in having *Constantine* on a pedestal during the Vision of the Cross. The pedestal of the equestrian statue may resonate with the one from the Adlocutio-Vision of the Cross type. The pedestal somehow destroys the magic of the subject-matter as the *Vision of the Cross*.
[476] The *Cabalus Constantini* had stood in the Campus Lateranensis (the piazza in front of the lateral entrance to the Lateran Basilica) until Paul III Farnese (1534-1544) decided to transfer it to the Capitoline Hill. For more details, see Chapter I.
[477] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 33. Another representation of Constantine astride appeared on the Barberini ivory plaque.

utility and abuse of the arts of painting and sculpture, such as *Discorso intorno alle imagini* by Paleotti (1582) and the much later *Trattato della pittura e scultura, uso, et abuso loro* (1652) coauthored by the Jesuit Giovanni D. Ottonelli and the artist Pietro da Cortona, the statue of Constantine holding the cross is cited as an example. The statue is used to make an argument about the legitimacy of creating images of Christian rulers without provoking accusation of idolatrous practices.[478] According to the traditional belief with regard to this statue, mentioned by both Paleotti and Ottonelli, the statue evidences the harmless practice of Christian leaders erecting statues to themselves. The reason for such a conclusion was that this particular statue celebrated the victories of the emperor not as the result of his own martial efforts but as the result of divine intervention.[479] This statue also fascinated artists and patrons invested in Constantinian imagery. Pietro da Cortona, for example, offered his version, in a piece belonging to a short tapestry cycle on the *Life of Constantine* (1628-1638) for the Barberini (fig. VI. 26), of how the statue might have looked.[480]

The treatise composed by Ottonelli, with the collaboration of da Cortona, is helpful in exploring another aspect related to the *Constantine* project, namely its location in the narthex of St. Peter's. Ottonelli has specifically dealt with the issue of living

[478] The later treatise is mostly attributed to G. D. Ottonelli. It represents a late echo of the rhetoric employed by the theologians eager to control sacred art in the late sixteenth century. For Ottonelli's excess of zeal that led even to conflicts with his Jesuit fellows see Joseph Connors, "*Chi era Ottonelli?*," in *Pietro da Cortona*, ed. Christoph L. Frommel and Sebastian Schütze (Milan: Electa, 1998), 29-35. For the treatise: Marco Collareta, "L'Ottonelli-Berrettini e la critica moralistica," in *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, Classe di lettere e filosofia, ser. III, V, 1975, 177-196.

[479] "Legessi del Gran Costantino, che congiuse, come ricca gioia, una particella della S. Croce alla sua statua in Constantinopoli: e volle, che in un'altra sua in Roma fosse posto il segno venerádo della medesima Croce, accioche con segni tali dichiarasse à tutti, che le lodi delle fatte imprese, & il trofeo delle sue vittorie, non si doveva attribuire a se, rappresentato nella statua, mà ricevuti da Dio come Conservatore de'terreni Imperii, e Signor di tutto l'universo." Ottonelli, *Trattato della pittura e scultura*, 108.

[480] For more on da Cortona's *Constantine*, see Chapter VI.

potentates installed in the proximity of places of worship. Ottonelli emulated Paleotti and subsequently reproduced many of the ideas presented in Paleotti's treatise. At the same time, he felt entitled to expand on concerns raised in the period between the publication of Paleotti's book and his own day. The erection of statues in honor of leaders near churches had surfaced as a topic that had to be addressed. Ottonelli approved such a practice because he claimed that the statues in honor of these potentates would automatically oblige them to become eternal defenders of the respective establishments. He cited as examples the statue of Sixtus V in front of the Duomo in Loreto and the statue of Henry IV in the portico of the Lateran Basilica (fig. V. 28).[481] Seen in this light, Bernini's *Constantine* should have raised no objection because it did not portray a living emperor and Constantinian imagery had, prior to this time, found its way into churches through related legends such as the *Acta Sylvestri* and the *Legend of the Holy Cross*. Nevertheless, the condition under which an author like Ottonelli found the placement of statues of potentates near churches permissible shows that a conspicuous representation of a lay ruler as a defender of the Holy See was preferable. As already mentioned in Chapter II, the title attributed to Constantine was "Defender of the Church" (*Ecclesiae Defensor*). In this way, a statue of the emperor was perfectly suitable for the intersection

[481] "… onde secondo me riprension non meriterebbe hora l'erretione d'una statua, per honorar il vivo principe, in mezzo d'una piazza, o d'altro luogo vicino ad un sacro Tempio: anzi stimo, che sarebbe argomento à prova che tal Principe viver vuole, e morire perpetuo difensore, e protettore di quell Tempio, dell'ecclesiastico suo decoro. Così può stimar ogni prudente quando scorge sul fianco, ò in fronte di qualche Chiesa principale la statua del Principe, ò vivo, ò pur estinto. Come in Perugia vicino alla Cathedrale la statua del Gran Pontefice Romano. E nella Citta di Loreto avanti il Tempio, dedicato alla S. Vergine madre di Dio, la statua di Sisto V Pontefice vigilantisimo all'accrescimento del culto divino in quell sacro luogo. Lascio le statue d'altri Pontefici altrove collocate vicino a sacri Tempij; e ricordo quella del magnanimo Henrico IV. Re di Francia, la quale stà in Roma dentro una stanza sotto il portico di S. Giovanni Laterano, fatto da Sisto V & iui, quasi animate lodatrice, dichiara à tutti la liberalità di quell gran Rè benemerito di quell gran Tempio, e la sua reale, e molta pietà." Ottonelli, *Trattato della pittura e scultura,* 106.

of the narthex of St. Peter's and the Scala Regia of the Vatican Palace. More than just a defender of St. Peter's, Constantine was the founder of the basilica. On the one hand, an equestrian statue was a dignified pose for the Defender. On the other hand, just as the emperor himself had recognized when commissioning a statue of himself holding the cross, the source of Constantine's victories lay not in his own prowess, but in God.

A tribute to the ancient statue of Constantine, as well as its contemporary interpretation in terms of the kind of decorum discussed by Ottonelli, may have inspired the pontiff to ask Bernini for a statue that would conflate the Defender Constantine with the Constantine who acknowledges the divine origin of his empire. The deed from the life of Constantine that accommodated both of these characterizations was the Vision of the Cross that occurred before the emperor's victory over Maxentius. While Constantine played a crucial role for the institution of the papacy, it was equally important for the papacy to stress Constantine's dependence on the divine. Furthermore, by placing the stucco medallion with the *Baptism of Constantine* right above the *Constantine,* emphasis was given to Constantine's obedience to ecclesiastical authority. However, as mentioned above, the statue brings into play the Defender more that the emperor's visionary experience. Bernini's own words tend to support such an interpretation although he explicitly referred to the work as conveying the vision of the Cross. In 1665, while in Paris, Bernini mentioned the statue, which he was still working on at the time, in relation to a project for an equestrian statue of Louis XIV. He affirmed that: "This statue will be completely different from that of Constantine, for Constantine is represented in the act of admiring the Vision of the Cross appearing to him and that of the King will be in the

attitude of majesty and command."[482] The comparison between the two planned equestrian statues sheds additional light on how the theme of submission to the will of God was embedded in the *Constantine*. Indeed, it is this sense of subordination of the emperor to the divine that the pontiff wanted to extract from an image of Constantine. For one approaching the statue through the corridor, the Defender takes preeminence. A statue of Constantine, regardless of the pose and the narrative into which it was included, had the potential to inspire in viewers strong reactions. The Defender pose could signify, by extension, homage to past and contemporary Christian leaders while the Vision of the Cross signified the submission of Constantine to God and encouraged these same leaders to imitate Constantine. The popes were God's mediators on earth, and *Constantine* was there to defend them.

The dual meaning perceptible in Bernini's *Constantine*, as well the realization of the passage from one state to another was consciously orchestrated. It endured, too, in the experience of the statue, beyond the ephemeral effect of discovering the artifice. The appreciation of a conceit, involving a transition between the two meanings and states, could have invited the beholder to expect more of the same. The statue, understood as capturing Constantine in the visionary experience of the cross, is comprehensible to the beholder more readily when one approaches the statue from the narthex of St. Peter's rather than from the corridor. It is even possible for the viewer approaching from the corridor to fail to see the cross and the banderole on his way up towards the Scala Regia, but not when returning by the same route. Those who had access to the Scala and Sala Regia, and for whom these spaces were designed to impress, were principally potentates

[482] Quoted in English in Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia*, 177.

and ambassadors. For the visitor entering through the corridor and approaching the *Constantine*, the statue reveals itself little by little, whereas the triumphal arch of the Scala Regia with the Chigi coat-of-arms dominate clearly and constantly the visual field opened to the beholder. After passing the *Constantine*, the bare walls of the Scala Regia oblige the visitor to keep the *Constantine* in mind as the most recent powerful image he experienced. While climbing the second flight of the stairs of the Scala Regia, the visitor discovers gradually another image, this time a fresco representing Charlemagne confirming the donation of his father Pepin (fig. V. 39 a, b). The predicted transition occurs through the inevitable connection, orchestrated by Alexander VII and detected by the viewer, between Constantine and Charlemagne, as Bernini's *Constantine* represents a critical point of reference, in effect a prelude to the Sala Regia and its visual program.

The connection between the first Christian emperor and the first Holy Roman emperor represents a pivotal detail of the decorative scheme. This relationship between the images of Constantine and Charlemagne parallels the configuration diagrammed by Alexander (fig. V. 40).[483] There is more, however, that can be said about the relationship between the two emperors. As has been demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, the two emperors are critical figures in the fresco cycle of historical donations bestowed upon the papacy exhibited in the Archivum Vaticanum. We have seen how the theme of donation was activated in the Sala Regia in the fresco of Charlemagne's donation, a hall where other donations scenes were also depicted.

As already highlighted in Chapter III, the Sala Regia was adorned with a series of large frescoes that depict critical moments in the relationship between the papacy and the

[483] Observation made by T. Marder. See Marder, *Bernini's Scala Regia*, 208.

Holy Roman Empire (such as the meeting of Frederic Barbarossa and Alexander III) and in the fight against "infidels" and heretics (such as the battle of Lepanto and the suppression of the Huguenots). There is also a series of small panels dedicated to historical donations of important rulers. We became familiar with the donation frescoes in the Sala Regia in the second chapter of this dissertation: the *Donation of Liutprand*, the *Donation of Pepin* (fig. V. 45), the *Donation of Peter of Aragon* (fig. II. 24), the *Donation of Charlemagne* (fig. V. 39b) and the *Donation of Otto I* (fig. II. 25). The Donation of Constantine is conspicuously absent, but Bernini's *Constantine* at the base of the landing of the Scala Regia integrated Constantinian imagery into the Regia area of the Vatican. Bernini's *Constantine* showing the emperor as a Defender, and guided by the cross which inspired him to victory, paves the endeavors of future Christians to defend the Church as one can see in the frescoes in the Sala Regia. Constantine prefaced in an exemplary manner a ruler's role in supporting the papacy. The Cross explained the source of his power. However, the very scene that explicitly demonstrated *how* Constantine comported himself with the papacy, at his best, the Donation of Constantine, is absent not only from the donation scenes of the Sala Regia but also from the Constantinian imagery at the base of the landing of the Scala Regia.

No public works of Alexander’s pontificate exhibit a visual representation of the Donation of Constantine. The debate on the Donation, as well as its public defense by papal supporters, had been increasingly muted in the decades preceding Alexander’s reign. As demonstrated above, the interest in temporal power remained constant. Furthermore, visual evidence about the pontiff's endorsement of the donation phenomenon appears in the Archivum Vaticanum, where the main pictorial cycle was

executed during the reign of Paul V. There, Alexander VII added an oval fresco in a feigned stucco molding in the third room (fig. V. 18). This intervention shows that Alexander VII adopted Paul V's vision of papal politics expressed in that fresco cycle. There, both the Donation of Constantine and a genealogy of donations were conspicuous. At the same time, when commissioning imagery dedicated to the first Christian emperor, the pontiff could ponder upon how Constantinian imagery had been previously employed at the Vatican. When Alexander VII settled on the location of Bernini's *Constantine*, he knew that Sala di Costantino, where a Donation of Constantine had been frescoed in the 1520's, had had the function of the Sala Regia in the past.[484] Moreover, Alexander VII did not miss the occasion to use Constantinian imagery, the *Donation of Constantine* inclusively, when effectively needed. It is worth looking briefly at one example where the Donation itself is represented.

At a certain point in the early 1660's, the pontiff's intention was to send an elaborate ebony cabinet, decorated with scenes from the life of Constantine, as a gift to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I, who was then fighting against the Turks (fig. V. 46).[485] While Constantinian imagery was ideal for promoting the fight against "infidels,"

[484] For this topic, see Chapter III.

[485] Just as with Bernini's *Constantine*, the cabinet was finished only after the death of the pontiff. However, it was sent to the same recipient designated by Alexander VII. As one can see, the miniature statue on the top of the cabinet and the central panel allude to Bernini's *Constantine*. The cabinet was been initially believed to have been offered as a gift by Cardinal Landgrave Federico d'Assia to Leopold I. Alvar González-Palacios was the first who timidly put forward, in a note, the hypothesis that Alexander VII may have offered the cabinet instead. His hypothesis is based on a note included by Pastor in his *The History of the Popes*, 49. González-Palacios arranged the decorative artworks in his study in relation to the principal material used, therefore the cabinet is treated under the rubric of ebony. Thanks to archival documentation, González-Palacios succeed in identifying the ebony artist as Jacob Herman, an artist active in Rome in that period and who received other commissions from Alexander VII. About the decorative program, González-Palacios notes that it was intended to deal with the relationship between the Church and the Empire. The document in Pastor refers to the battle against the Turks conducted by Leopold I. For general information on the cabinet, see González-Palacios, 2000, p. 28-30; Friedrich Polleroβ, "Pro decore majestas." Zur

a *Donation of Constantine* (fig. V. 47), prominently inserted on the vertical axis of the cabinet, would have reminded the emperor about his habitual duties towards the papacy. This *Donation of Constantine* shows more than the emperor's act of donation. There is the heavy presence of clergy in the scene. While the emperor, who addresses to the pontiff, points towards the document of the donation to which only one seal is attached, a few clergymen hold what seems to be a different type of document because of the three seals fastened to it. This latter type of document was most probably an edict, a document that referred to particular ecclesiastical privileges. Therefore, this *Donation of Constantine* built upon the explanation of the Donation in which the document itself served as the object of donation and offered an additional element to the explanation by making a distinction between sorts of documents. I treat this *Donation* only briefly here because the state of current research on the cabinet does not allow me to determine whether or not the episode was finished, or approved, in this form during the papacy of Alexander VII.

When contrasting these different commissions of Alexander VII in terms of the incorporation of a visual representation of the Donation in a Constantinian story or in a genealogy of donations, allusions to the Donation surface plausibly even when the Donation was omitted. Despite the absence of a visual representation of the Donation of Constantine *per se* at the base landing of the Scala Regia, the position of Bernini's *Constantine* propels the statue to act as more than just a general preface to the Sala Regia. The connection between Constantine and the scene at the top of the stairway depicting

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Rapräsentation Kaiser Leopolds I. in Architektur, Bildender und Angewandter Kunst," Mainz, 2004, 2002/2003, S. 202, 382-409.

the *Donation of Charlemagne* imposes upon the *Constantine* a donation message and its insertion within the donation theme in the Sala Regia. The inclusion of the *Constantine* in the larger donation theme makes the *Constantine* operate reflexively as a proxy for the Donation of Constantine. Altogether, the donation scenes form a genealogy of donations, whose origin lies in the statue of the first benefactor of the Church.

The *Constantine* could easily function both to deflect attention away from the controversial subject of the Donation of Constantine or to allude to it obliquely. The sequence of imagery that the viewer encountered upon entering the palace through the Braccio Costantino presented an ecclesiastical genealogy beginning with the *Madonna with the Child and St. Peter and St.Paul* (fig. V. 44), followed eventually by the tapestry set with the deeds of the Apostles designed by Raphael (fig. V. 32), and then the *Constantine.* Such an ecclesiastical genealogy served to assure visitors about the religious tone ascribed to the *Constantine*.[486]

That the *Constantine* activated an immediate association with the emperor's notoriously debated act of donation would have been obvious to many. In the above-mentioned pamphlet, the critique of the errors made by Bernini is shrewdly penned so that it touches upon the issue of the Donation. Discussing Constantine's physiognomy, the author criticized the shape and size of Constantine's beard and pointed out that Bernini could be excused for representing Constantine with a beard because without one Constantine would not have been safe next to Bernini’s brother, Luigi, and the tradition

[486] Constantine considered himself an apostle; he was entombed in a Church dedicated to the twelve apostles in Constantinople.

of the Donation would have contradicted the public opinion about it.[487] The reference to the Donation is a pun on the sense of a 'beard' as a 'lie.' The witty play of words attacks on a personal level both the artist, due to the sodomy incident in which his brother Luigi was involved, and the commissioner, due to the papacy's attachment to the Constantinian foundation of its temporal power. Equally interesting, an anonymous defender of Bernini's *Constantine*, in his response to the pamphleteer, not only reiterated the validity of the Donation of Constantine but also presented Alexander VII as a successor of St. Sylvester, rather than St. Peter as was more orthodox, and described Constantine as the first donor of the Church.[488] The Donation of Constantine persisted in igniting spirits, and a statute of the emperor alluded to its complicated past. Furthermore, the alignment of the *Constantine* with a series of donations presented it as an unmistakable proxy for the Donation. Dissimulation is at play here.

Before leaving the Constantine, it is worth invoking the words of the pamphleteer one more time. Criticizing the size and posture of the horse, the pamphleteer concludes that Bernini may have wanted them so because: "launched in this way [Constantine] could arrive faster to Constantinople, and even in Heaven".[489] The allusion to heaven in this satirical comment refers to the manner in which Constantine could be treated like a saint in the period, as explored in Chapter II. In order to understand the allusion to

[487]"ch'egli affatto sbarbato, non sarrebbe stato sicuro da Luigi suo fratello, ed anco mal sigura la donatione di Costantino, senza qualchè vestigio di barba, per non dismentir con un mente imberbe la publica fede." *Discorso critico sul Costantino messo alla Berlina, ovvero Bernina su la Porta di San Pietro*, Chigi I.VII. 270; fol.123r.
[488] "Fù maestoso pensiero d'Alessandro 7.o &.o miracolo de' Pontefici, et vero successore di Silvestro con fiescare non solo con Canoni, mà ancora con le statue la pretiosa liberalità di un tanto Imperadore, che spogliandosi della propria Corona, la posse in Capo alla Chiesa, rinustendo quel primo Donatore colla donatione de' suoi beni." *Il Costantino del Sig.re Cavalier Bernino Difeso*, Chigi I.VII. 270; fol. 133.
[489] "acciò che possa di lancio più presto arrivare à Constantinopoli, et anco in Cielo." *Discorso*, Chigi I.VII. 270; fol.124v.

Constantinople, it will be necessary to turn to the next chapter.

Chapter VI

The Foundation of Constantinople, or the *Translatio Imperii ad Orientem*, as a proxy for the Donation of Constantine: The Rubens-da Cortona *Life of Constantine*

While admitting the spuriousness of the Donation document, however silently or indirectly, the papacy did not abandon its pretentions to temporal power. The difficulty of invoking the Donation of Constantine directly, as authorization of the temporal power of the papacy, created a void in the self-legitimizing juridical system of the institution. Instead, the papacy reformulated its imperial claims in such a way that the controversy became opaque. Essentially, the strategies at the disposal of the papacy and its allies were either to recycle the medieval theory of papal power based on divine authority or find a surrogate "Donation" within the corpus of Constantinian legends.[490] I would argue that the need to rescue the privileges linked to the Donation of Constantine led to the creation of proxies that could simultaneously affirm the institution's temporal authority and elude immediate associations with the infamous document. This chapter examines the way in which another deed in the "Life of Constantine"—namely the foundation of the city of Constantinople, interchangeably represented by the *Foundation of Constantinople* or the *translatio imperii ad Orientem*—was employed by papal advocates both textually and

[490] There were, however, those who stubbornly refused to acknowledge the spuriousness of the document. For those continuing to defend the Donation of Constantine throughout the seventeenth century, see Antonazzi, *Lorenzo Valla*, 176-186; Vian, *La donazione*, 129-168. This intransigence was usually practiced by individuals not in the direct orbit of the pope.

visually owing to its ability to stand for the Donation narrative when direct reference to the latter became problematic.

Those interested in preserving the Constantinian origin of papal power could find a viable proxy for the Donation in the very text of the document. In this way the implications of the relationship between the Donation and the proxy could be transparent enough, without direct reference to the specious document. The foundation of Constantinople, the New Rome, an event known from undeniable historical evidence, emerged as a logical conclusion to Constantine's act of donation and thus was most suitable as a proxy. Indeed, Constantine's foundation in the 320 of the new capital of the empire served the eighth-century creators of the document perfectly. Inserted into the paragraph immediately following the enumeration of Western territories ceded to the papacy, the account of the translation of power to the East implicitly reinforced Constantine's institution of the Roman pontiff as the ruler of the West.

> Wherefore we have considered it appropriate for our empire and kingly power to be transferred and transmuted for the eastern territories, and in the best place of the province Byzantia for a state to be built named for us and our empire to be established there. For where [Rome] the prince of priests and the head of the Christian religion has been established by the heavenly ruler, it is not just for the earthly ruler to have power there. [491]

Hence, according to the document, the foundation of Constantinople as the imperial capital is intrinsically linked to Constantine's foundation of the papal monarchy.

This eighth-century document presented the establishment, in the third decade of

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[491] "Unde congruum prospeximus, nostrum imperium et regni potestatem orientalibus transferri ac transmutari regionibus et in Byzantiae provincia in optimo loco nomini nostro civitatem aedificari et nostrum illic constitui imperium; quoniam, ubi principatus sacerdotum et christianae religionis caput ab imperatore caelesti constitutum est, iustum non est, ut illic imperator terrenus habeat potestatem." "The Donation of Constantine." Lorenzo Valla, *On the Donation*, 180-181.

the fourth century, of a clear dichotomy between the secular and spiritual domains that was meant to be preserved in perpetuity. Despite efforts to ground the facts in Constantine's own time, the forged document was prompted by concerns of the papacy in the eighth century to gain independence from both the secular and the religious power of Constantinople. Thus, at the turn of the ninth century, not long after the fabrication of the document of the Donation, Constantine abandoning of Rome for the newly-founded city of Constantinople served the papacy in instituting what was to become known as the *translatio imperii,* a transfer of power from the Greek emperors ruling in Constantinople to a new lineage of emperors validated by the papacy in the West. The transition moment was marked by the coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III in St. Peter's in 800 AD. The *translatio imperii* made the pope the creator of the Holy Roman Empire and indispensable to the emperor. The Donation of Constantine and *translatio imperii* were designed to be, as Riccardo Fubini has observed, doctrinally complementary.[492] Even though the transfer was long advertised as a *renovatio* of the glorious Roman Empire, it basically meant a geographical division of power within the limits of a territory that had by that time ceased to correspond to the territory of the ancient empire. As the papacy saw the problem, Constantine, as a ruler of Rome, had relocated the secular political epicenter of the empire to Constantinople, and conversely, the pope, as the post-Constantine ruler of Rome, translated the epicenter back to Rome in the hands of the leader of the Holy Roman Empire, who then ruled under the papal aegis.[493] Contrary to the imperial politics of the Eastern Empire which proclaimed the emperor as the head of

[492] Riccardo Fubini, "Humanism and Truth: Valla Writes Against the Donation of Constantine," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no.1 (1996): 79-86.
[493] Secular rulers of different sorts had exited in Italy and the West after Constantine transferred his seat from Rome to Constantinople but they were not emperors.

both the secular and religious power—what Max Weber called "Caesaropapism"—the papal policy initiated with the *translatio imperii* attributed considerable power to the papacy in both the secular and spiritual sphere: essentially "Papocaesarism."[494] Lay leaders had frequently manifested resistance to papal pretensions, but their enthusiasm for exploring the two opposing theories of rule, with special care given to the Constantinopolitan ideology as founded by Constantine, could also offer them valuable arguments for problematizing the locus of secular power. This linkage, forged within papal ideology in the eighth century, between the Donation of Constantine, the foundation of Constantinople, and the *translatio imperii*, was to have a profound effect upon the papal articulations of power in the early modern period.

Constantinian imagery did not become less important to the papacy after the Donation became problematic, and the Roman Church was not the only institution invested in narratives about Constantine. In the decade immediately following the latest visual confirmation of the *Donation of Constantine* during the pontificate of Paul V (1605-1621), thirteen *modelli* for a tapestry cycle devoted to the *Life of Constantine* were created by the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens and dispatched to Paris to be turned into tapestries in the Saint-Marcel workshop in the 1620s (figs. VI. 1-13). [495] Seven tapestries of the cycle, the only ones to be woven of this particular set, were subsequently offered by Louis XIII as a diplomatic gift to the cardinal-nephew Francesco Barberini in Paris in

[494] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 1158-1204. For short definitions of the concepts, see Richard Swedberg, and Ola Agevall, *The Max Weber Dictionary: Key Words and Central Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 22. Subsequent historical studies on the topic often adopted Weber's concepts.
[495] For the Donation during the pontificate of Paul V, see Chapter V.

1625 (figs.VI. 14-20).[496] The Cardinal was present at the French court as an emissary of Pope Urban VIII Barberini and was invested with the responsibility of concluding peace between France and Spain over the thorny matter of territorial control in the Lombard region of the Valtelline.[497] The weaving of the tapestries was already underway when the French diplomats decided to exploit them as a politically meaningful gift to the papacy. Even though none of the seven pieces depicted the Donation of Constantine, a cycle devoted to Constantine and gifted to the Pope would appear to be a pertinent illustration of the French king as "il Re Christianissimo."[498] The diplomatic gift served as an effective means of compensating for the disagreement of the French crown with the papacy regarding the peace between France and Spain, at the time when the papacy was maneuvering to maintain high stakes in the peace negotiations.

Once in Rome, Francesco Barberini, instead of commissioning the rest of the set

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[496] Francesco Barberini advanced as a cardinal-nephew with the election of his uncle Maffeo Barberini as Urban VIII in 1623. In France, Francesco Barberini was accompanied by Giovan Pamphilij, Girolamo Aleandro, Cassiano dal Pozzo, and Cesare Magalotti. See Simone A. Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens and the Barberini, ca. 1625-1640* (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University) (Ann Arbor: Microfilms International, 1979), 26. The conntemporary Giacinto Gigli splendidly summarized the mission in his *Diario di Roma* (1608-1670): (the last entry for February1625) "In questo mese fu dal Papa mandato al Re di Francia il Card. Barberino Legato Apostolico a trattar la pace, d'onde ritornò poi alli 17. di Dicembre. senza haver fatto nulla." Giacinto Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, ed. Manlio Barberito (Rome: Editore Colombo, 1994), 144. According to the preliminary discussions between the Nuncio in France, Bernardino Spada, and Cardinal Richelieu, the French King asked for the Palatinate in exchange for peace. Such a request was obviously beyond the pope's capacity to satisfy (Antonio Barberini Card. di S. Onofrio and Cav. Magalotti *Memorie a V. Illm Sig.re Cardinale Barberini Legato de Latere*. Barb. Lat. 5273, fol. 3). Cassiano dal Pozzo was chosen as a member of the Paris legation and entrusted with writing a diary of the mission (preserved in the Barberini Archive, BAV). In his diary, Cassiano dal Pozzo refers to eight not seven tapestries (see quotes in Urbano Barberini, "Pietro da Cortona e l'arazzeria Barberini," *Bollettino d'Arte* 35 (1950), 47). Was an eighth tapestry offered to Francesco Barberini or did dal Pozzo miscount them?

[497] The Valtelline was a strategic passage that permitted control on the routes between Northern Italy and both Habsburg territories and the Spanish Netherlands. For a summary of the political situation, see René Pillorgot, and Suzanne Pillorget, *France baroque, France classique: 1589-1715* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1995), esp. 215; Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens*, 26-30; Clemént Pieyre, "La légation du Cardinal Barberini en France en 1625, insuccès de la diplomatie du pape Urbain VIII," in *I Barberini e la cultura Europea del Seicento: atti del convegno internazionale Palazzo Barberini alle Quttro Fontane, 7-11 dicembre 2004*, ed. Lorenza Mochi Onori (Rome : De Luca Editori D'Arte, 2007), 87-94.

[498] The papacy attributed the title of *Re Christianissimo* to the French king as pendant to the Spanish royal title of *Re Catholico*.

from Rubens' designs, arranged for its completion by having Pietro da Cortona design six new scenes, different from those provided by Rubens. The new scenes were woven between 1630 and 1638 (fig. VI. 21-26).[499] The transfer of the tapestry set from Paris to Rome, where it entered the Barberini collection, constituted not only a change of location but also one of narrative.[500] I would argue that Francesco Barberini's intention to re-write the account of Constantine's deeds implied a negation of the French royal interests communicated through the narrative and the appropriation of Rubens' episodes in the service of Barberini's political needs, and more broadly those of the pro-papacy party. But not even this revised representation of Constantine's life was to include a depiction of the Donation of Constantine. Instead, another episode from the Constantinian narrative, the *Foundation of Constantinople*, was employed. I propose that its purpose was to function as a proxy for the *Donation of Constantine*.

Scholarship on the *Life of Constantine* tapestry set has focused on its production in theSaint-Marcel workshop and the newly-founded Barberini workshop in Rome and on the respective roles of Rubens and da Cortona in the project. The tapestries have stirred interest mostly among historians of decorative arts, who have traced the workshops where the tapestries were woven.[501] The preparatory phases of their fabrication required

[499] It seems that Pietro da Cortona was mostly seen as an executer of his patron's ideas. See Joseph Connors, "Pietro da Cortona, 1597-1669," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 3 (Sep., 1998): 318-321. Scholars could not establish hitherto who devised the Constantinian story woven in the Barberini workshop.

[500] The tapestry set was subsequently installed mainly in the Pallazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane in Rome, see below p. 341-342, and n. 660, 661.

[501] A geographically determined approach emerges from early scholarship. French scholars showed interest in tracing the history of the Saint-Marcel workshop where seven of its pieces had been woven, whereas Italian scholars succeeded in establishing a chronology of Pietro da Cortona's panels. Maurice Fenaille, *Etat general des tapisseries de la manufacture des Gobelins, depuis son origine jusqu'à non jours, I, Les ateliers parisiens au XVII^{e} jusqu'à la foundation de la manufacture royale des meubles de la Couronne, en 1662* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1923). Urbano Barberini, "Pietro da Cortona:" 12-56.

modelli and cartoons.[502] Scholars have addressed this additional visual evidence particularly from the perspective of the artists' working procedures.[503] Stylistic and iconographic considerations have dominated previous studies of the tapestry set as a whole.[504] The iconographic analyses either neglect da Cortona's pieces or offer to reconstruct the original display of the set. [505] Marc Fumaroli has investigated the political circumstances underlying the commissioning of a Constantinian series from Rubens. The conclusions of his study do not regard the entire story that unfolds in the tapestry set but focus on a specific episode, the *Triumph of Rome*.[506] Elizabeth McGrath and Arnout Balis have examined Rubens' approach to the depiction of history but the Constantinian story itself is minimaly treated in their work.[507] The study of tapestry display in Baroque palaces has demonstrated quite clearly the investment of important families in mediating their images through this particularly expensive art form.[508]

Regardless of their methodological approaches, scholars have been challenged by the question of who commissioned the series from Rubens. One theory, dominant in

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[502] None of the cartoons has been preserved but all Rubens' oil on paper *modelli* have. A few of da Cortona's drawings and oil on canvas *modelli* have survived as well.
[503] Julius L. Held, *The Oil sketches of Peter Paul Rubens. A Critical Catalogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
[504] David Dubon, *Tapestries from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: Constantine the Great designed by Peter Paul Rubens and Pietro da Cortona* (London: Phaidon Press, 1964); Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens*,1979; Peter Krüger, *Studien zu Rubens' Konstantinszyclus*, (Frankfurt am Main-New York: Europäische Hochschulschriften, XXVIII, 1989).
[505] John Coolidge, "A Portrait by Rubens of Salomon de Brosse," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* XXIV (1965): 310-312; Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens*, 60-126.
[506] Fumaroli, "Cross, Crown, and Tiara," 88-102.
[507] Elizabeth McGrath and Arnout Balis, *Rubens: Subjects From History*. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, Pt. 13, (London: Harvey Miller, 1997).
[508] Pascal-François Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini et la décoration d'intérieur dans la Rome baroque* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005); Thomas P. Campbell, Pascal-François Bertrand, Jeri Bapasola, and Bruce White, *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor* (New York : Metropolitan Museum of Art ; New Haven : Yale University Press, 2007). Interstingly, the *Life of Constanine* has never attracted too much attention in patronage studies on the Barberini although the tapestry production in their family workshop indicates that Francesco Barberini put considerable energy in to this art form.

scholarship on Rubens, suggests that the King Louis XIII was the commssioner of the series. According to another hypothesis that has recently gained support, the entrepreneurs of the Saint-Marcel tapestry workshop, Marc Comans and François de la Planche, were the ones who ordered the series from Rubens and Louis XIII became involved in the project much later.[509] In this chapter I do not address this question but emphasize instead that the French king appropriated the seven tapestries to represent his diplomatic gift to the Barberini in 1625.

This dissertation not only integrates the tapestry set within the corpus of Constantinian imagery created in the Early Modern period but more importantly emphasizes the relevance of the set for the multifaceted debate on the Donation of Constantine taking place in Europe at that time. The present chapter examines issues related to the *Life of Constantine* tapestry set that have been overlooked in the scholarship to date: the context and politics of gifting, the reception of the Rubens pieces at the Barberini court, and the change in the Constantinian narrative that occurred with the addition of the new pieces designed by da Cortona. The analysis situates the *Life of Constantine* at the intersection between general concerns regarding the search for a proxy for the problematic Donation of Constantine and the particularities of the gift exchange between the papacy and the French court in 1625. Furthermore, it contends that a certain restorative enterprise regarding Constantinian imagery, promoted by Cardinal Barberini for the Jubilee of 1625, prompted the French to respond with the gift of the tapestries in

[509] Pioneering studies on the Saint-Marcel workshop were published in the nineteenth century but they were almost never considered sufficiently carefully in the twentieth century. Koenraad Brosens, "Who Commissioned Rubens's 'Constantine' Series? A New Perspective: The Entrepreneurial Strategy of Marc Comans and François de la Planche," in *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 33, no.3 (January 2007): 166-182; Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: Subjects from History Vol. III, The Constantine series.* Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard (London: Harvey Miller Publishers), 2011.

the very same year. It proposes that the *Life of Constantine* tapestries were instrumented in the ongoing discourse about the extent of papal power, especially of its rights devolved from the translation of the imperial seat from Rome to Constantinople (*translatio imperii ad Orientem*) in the fourth century. I argue that one episode of the tapestry set in particular, the *Foundation of Constantinople*, functioned as a proxy for the Donation of Constantine. I also demonstrate that the Foundation of Constantinople would have been understood quite differently in Paris and in Rome even though it would have denoted the idea of the *translatio imperii* in both places.

The Constantinian Story Illustrated in the Tapestry Set

Rubens' narration of Constantine's life was destined to reach Rome only in a fragmentary version. The seven tapestries that formed the royal gift of Louis XIII to his political counterpart Pope Urban VIII included the following scenes: the *Double Marriage of Constantine and Licinius*, the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, the *Entry into Rome*, the *Baptism of Constantine*, the *Veneration of the True Cross*, the *Foundation of Constantinople*, and the *Death of Constantine* (figs. VI. 14-20). The other six episodes envisioned by Rubens in 1622-23 but not woven for the set gifted to the Barberini were the *Apparition of the Monogram*, the *Labarum*, the *Trophy*, *Constantine and Crispus* (alternatively identified *as Constantinus appoints Constantine as his successor*), the *Land Campaign against Licinius*, and the *Triumph of Rome* (figs. VI. 21-26). [510] The episodes

[510] The last three episodes have created problems of interpretation. The first one, traditionally deciphered as *Constantine and Crispus*, has been recently renamed by Koenraad Brosens as *Constantinus appoints Constantine as his successor*; his attribution is based on iconographic grounds (see Brosens, *Rubens*, 187-9). The identification of the second episode as the *Land Campaign against Licinius* has been challenged by the same author. According to Brosens, this battle episode should be considered the pendant of the *Battle*

designed after Pietro da Cortona's *modelli* and interpolated into the Rubens' seven tapestry series include *Constantine Fighting the Lion*, the *Vision of the Cross*, the *Sea Battle*, *Constantine Burning the Memorials*, *Constantine Destroying the Idols*, and the *Statue of Constantine* (figs. VI. 21-26).[511]

The life of Constantine generated by the fusion of the Rubens and da Cortona pieces is a mélange of historical and legendary events. It is worth underscoring that neither Rubens' nor da Cortona's *modelli* include a representation of the Donation of Constantine—so far as we know, at no point in the evolving project was this scene

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Milvian Bridge (renamed by the author the *Collapse of the Milvian Bridge*); the two altogether would form a diptych depicting the battle of the Milvian Bridge (see Brosens, *Rubens*, 203-5). Curiously, the third episod, the *Triumph of Rome* (fig. VI. 14) was never woven, not even in the subsequent reproductions of his entire set. Some of the scholars who considered Louis XIII the commissioner of the series inferred that this episode was rejected by King Louis XIII and replaced with the *Death of Constantine* (fig. VI. 12). Some scholars even hypothesized that the *Death of Constantine* had not been designed by Rubens. In addition, the dearth of information on the whereabouts of the *Death of Constantine modello* in the seventeenth century (not listed in a few existent seventeenth-century inventories in which the titles of the episodes, if mentioned, appear confusing and not included in the series of engravings made by Nicholas Tardieu after the twelve pieces ascertained in the collection of d'Orleans since 1727). Brosens has proposed a more radical approach. He has eliminated it from the series. I do not see the exclusion of the *Triumph of Rome* as necessary for the inclusion of the *Death of Constantine* in its stead. If one looks attentively at Rubens' series, there is nothing unnatural in concluding the *Life of Constantine* with a dignified account of the emperor's death. The fact that it would be an unprecedented iconographic scene would not undermine Rubens' right to introduce one if he chose to do so. He could easily look for literary sources such as Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* or Baronius' third volume of the *Annales Ecclesiatici* that include chapters on the death of Constantine. On the other hand, one can speculate on Rubens' known propensity for Stoic philosophy, and thus death acquires even a more nuanced value. Evidently, the eventuality of the rejection of the *Triumph of Rome* appeared very seductive to scholars interested in emphasizing the political discontent between the French crown and the papacy. Simone Zurawski and, more elaborately, Marc Fumaroli have shown that a theme illustrating the universal dominance of Rome was no longer acceptable (See Fumaroli, "Cross, Crown, and Tiara," 97-99). At a close inspection of Rubens' *Triumph of Rome*, one may conclude that Rubens intended an allegorical representation of Constantine's resounding victories against barbarous nations (Scythians and Sarmatinas), important historical moments in the emperor's life because they marked the subjection of these nations to Rome for the first time (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Vita Constantini*, V-VII). Rubens' imposing Rome, seconded by the she-wolf and the triumphal attributes, adverts to such events. It would not be a unique instance when Rubens considered allegorical language for the Constantine series. The repetition of critical visual elements in the *Triumph of Rome* and the *Trophy* (fig. VI. 13) makes me consider the latter as the replacement for the former. The *Trophy* presented the same message like the *Triumph of Rome* but more succinctly. In addition, the scene had Constantine not Rome into the spotlight. These features may have been seen as more appropriate for a cycle glorifying Constantine.

[511] The da Cortona pieces are enumerated here according to the chronology internal to Constantinian biographies not to the succession in which they were produced.

planned for the cycle. With the tapestries produced in Paris and Rome conjoined, the trajectory of the emperor's life commences with *Constantine Fighting the Lion* (fig. VI. 21), an episode without precedent in Constantinian iconography and supposedly inspired by the remarkable military actions of the soldier Constantine in his youth. The progression continues with *The Double Marriage of Constantine and Licinius* (fig. VI. 14), which shows, besides the change in marital status of the characters, the coalition between Constantine and his collaborator Licinius, whose sister Constantine wed. Christian connotations appear for the first time with Constantine's *Vision of the Cross* (fig. VI. 22). This scene depicting the famous theophany experienced by Constantine right before his battle confrontation with the ruler of Rome Maxentius—who, according to the Constantinian legends, oppressed the people of Rome—in the proximity of the imperial capital. As the legend goes, Constantine righteously defeated Maxentius in the resounding *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (fig. VI. 15). The majority of the accounts of Constantine's life conclude the conflict with Maxentius with the triumph organized for Constantine (in this case, the *Entry into Rome* (fig. VI. 16). While the victory over Maxentius, although obtained with divine help, stressed Constantine's expertise on the battlefield and his conquest of Rome, the *Sea Battle* (fig. VI. 23) against Licinius emphasized Constantine's leadership potential. Constantine himself did not participate in this battle but had instructed his son, Crispus, in how to conduct the naval attack against Licinius, his one-time ally but now his enemy. Licinius' imminent death in the battle would cement Constantine's position as the sole ruler of the Roman Empire. A series of Christian deeds follow. *The Burning of the Memorials* (fig. VI. 24) refers to the tax concession offered to the Church and signals one of the first steps pursued by Constantine

in implementing Christianity in the empire. Constantine's true conversion to Christianity is shown in the *Baptism* (fig. VI. 18).[512] The embrace of Christian tenets led the emperor to order the *Destruction of the Idols* (fig. VI. 25). Similar attitudes toward Christianity became manifest in Constantine's act of devotion in *The Veneration of the True Cross* (fig. VI. 17). The major shift in the Roman political arena introduced by Constantine in the third decade of the fourth century by moving the capital of the empire to the newly founded Christian city of Constantinople is implied in *The Foundation of Constantinople* (fig. VI. 19). The exemplary end of Constantine's life is instructively presented in the *Death of Constantine* (fig. VI. 20). The last tapestry of the set, the *Statue of Constantine* (fig. VI. 26), has been always treated apart, due to it functional role as the back of a Baldachin that was to be installed in the same space where the tapestries were exhibited. However, if we were to consider this scene within the context of the numerous chronologies found in different accounts of Constantine in circulation in the period, we should place it at least before *The Foundation of Constantinople* as this episode attempted to offer an archeological reconstruction of the colossal statue of the emperor placed either in the Roman Forum or on the Campidoglio to honor Constantine's victories.

Echoes of the Donation of Constantine in the Tapestry Set

The narrative that resulted from the combination of Rubens' and da Cortona's pieces will be fully considered below in order to suggest the efficacy of the gift and its mutation into a Barberini product. In this section, I will demonstrate how three of

[512] For the Baptism as the transformative moment in the life of Constantine, see Chapter II.

Rubens' *modelli* and the tapestries based on them establish the relevance of this tapestry set to the Donation theme: the *Baptism of Constantine* (figs. VI. 10, 18), the *Foundation of Constantinople* (figs. VI. 11, 19), and the *Death of Constantine* (figs. VI. 12, 20).[513] In the previous chapters, especially in the second and fourth, I explained how the *Baptism* scene frequently served as a pendant to the *Donation.* In this Chapter, I already hinted at the *Foundation of Constantinople* as a proxy for the *Donation*. Also significant, as soon will become explicit, is the *Death of Constantine*. This episode owes its existence in this triumvirate to its ability to revive theories on the relationship between the foundation of Constantinople and the transfer of the empire.

Of the three tapestries, only the *Baptism* (figs. VI. 10, 18) materialized as the conveyer of political content in the presentation of the royal gift to the papal envoys. As already discussed in Chapter II, the official position of the Church on the Baptism of Constantine fuelled discontent because it contradicted respected ancient sources with regard to the two interconnected issues of the place and the officiant of the sacrament. According to the *Acta Sylvestri*, the Baptism took place in Rome at the hands of Pope Sylvester. The tradition initiated with Eusebius of Caesarea reported that Constantine was baptized in Nicomedia by the Arian Bishop Eusebius.[514] In the sixteenth century, with the legitimacy of the Donation increasingly challenged, the Roman Curia fiercely defended the Baptism because it offered an excellent means of demonstrating imperial deference to

[513] The *Foundation of Constantinople* is usually called the *Building of Constantinople* in Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Recently, K. Brosens has referred to it as the *Founding of Constantinople*. I have opted for the *Foundation of Constantinople* because of conspicuous reasons: it resonates with the central theme of this dissertation (the Constantinian period meant the foundation of the Church as a monarchical institution); Constantine did found the city; and contemporary sources refer to it as the *Foundation of Constantinople*. The inventory of 1649 calls it "la fondazione di Constantinopoli" (Inventory reproduced in Barberini 50-51, and quoted by Dubon, *Tapestries*, 16).

[514] The principal source on the baptism in Nicomedia is Eusebius of Caesarea (*Vita Constanini,* 330's AD). Later ancient sources (such as Sozomenos in the fifth century) quote Eusebius.

papal authority. On the gift-offering occasion in November 1625, the French royal councilors of Louis XIII selected solely the *Baptism* to be unveiled in front of Francesco Barberini.[515]

The *Baptism of Constantine* largely conforms to the conventions of the theme (fig. VI. 16).[516] It shows a close-up view into the octagonal space of the Lateran Baptistery, where, according to the *Acta Sylvestri*, the emperor received the baptismal sacrament. [517] Centrally positioned, Constantine kneels on a pillow— stripped of his imperial garb, his hands clasped and his head tilted down in submission—in front of Pope Sylvester, who administers the sacrament. Clergymen and laypeople surround the pair. One of these people, a layman, dominates the foreground and serves, in his modern costume, as a witness and narrator of the episode. Although Rubens obviously looked at the previous Roman renderings of the *Baptism of Constantine* while in Rome and could have studied the Lateran Baptistery—also called the Constantinian Baptistery—he departed from the archeologically verifiable architectural elements of the octagonal core of the Baptistery. Instead of the straight and bare columns of the Lateran Baptistery (figs. II. 11-17), Rubens opted for the Solomonic type of columns that once adorned the Constantinian Basilica of St. Peter's and were to be soon incorporated in the new decorative project of new St. Peter's endorsed by Urban VIII. However, the details that signal the issue of power are the papal accoutrement—the tiara, the red attire—bestowed by Constantine on Pope Sylvester according to the Donation text.[518] The *Baptism* overtly

[515] Cassiano dal Pozzo, Barb. Lat. 5688, fol. 329, BAV. Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Baroque*, 112-114.
[516] For an elaborate discussion on this topic, see Chapter II.
[517] For *Acta Sylvestri*, see Chapter II.
[518] There is a triple tiara in the tapestry but only a single-layer tiara in the *modello*.

echoed the Church's view of Constantine as its source of secular power. Consequently, not arbitrary reasons impelled the French diplomats to employ the *Baptism* as a metonym in the presentation of their gift of tapestries.

The *Foundation of Constantinople* (figs. VI.11, 19) adds an episode to the Constantinian imagery in an innovative manner. Its novelty has puzzled scholars. Koenraad Brosens has characterized it "as one of the least monumental scenes in the [Rubensian] series" and interpreted its inclusion in all eight editions of tapestries produced in Paris after Rubens' sketches as indicative of its decorative qualities. [519] However, I argue that there were significant political reasons for incorporating this episode into the Constantinian narrative, reasons which explain why the scene would have appealed to contemporaries. The image captures Constantine dressed in full imperial attire and symbolically represented by means of the immense eagle—an imperial attribute *par excellence*. Constantine is shown to be a very energetic leader whose imposing left-hand gesture refers to the city about to be built over the town of Byzantia on the shore of the Bosphorus for the imminent transfer of imperial power from Rome. The architects in charge of remodeling the city show the emperor and his attendant a plan and compare, by means of the compass and the naked eye a detail on the plan with a feature of the architecture of the new city under construction in the background.[520] To the right, workmen busy themselves with cutting, chiseling, and arranging marble slabs, capitals, and columns. Rubens' *modello* shows the small town of Byzantia in the back and no plan drawn on the sheet of paper displayed by the architects. The artist may have intentionally

[519] Brosens, *Rubens*, 231-232.
[520] As if in a virtuoso demonstration of Michelangelo's saying that the eye is endowed with a compass.

left the plan paper blank for a larger adaptability of the tapestries to the market. In the tapestry gifted to the Barberini, the town of Byzantia has already metamorphosed into the elaborate city of Constantinople and the architects show to Constantine the project for a centrally-planned building. With the *Foundation of Constantinople*, Rubens appropriately introduced into the cycle of the *Life of Constantine* an event that was verified by credible literary and archeological sources.

Equally unprecedented in the visual repertoire of Constantinian imagery is the *Death of Constantine* (figs. VI. 10, 28). In the foreground, Constantine on his deathbed holds in one of his hands the globe denoting the secular power that he is about to hand over to his three sons. With his other hand, Constantine points downwards to the terrestrial realm.[521] In a contrasting gesture, the clergyman behind the bed lifts his arm towards heavens. The scenario clearly proposes the separation of the two sorts of power, secular and ecclesiastical. At the same time, Constantine's sons advertise the political union to which they commit themselves through the placing of their arms around each other, confirming not only their mutual respect in ruling the empire but also their agreement to be the sole rulers and perpetuators of secular power. Although the image imposes a pro-imperial perspective on the delicate issue of the transfer of power, there is a technical detail that could have been exploited in favor of the papal party. Constantine died in "the East," after he had transferred the seat of the Empire to Constantinople, thus leaving room for some, as we shall see, to interpret the event as one specific to "the East" and irrelevant to the western territories already under papal administration.

[521] Constantine became ill during the preparatory campaign against Persians and died in Nicomedia without launching the military attack. None of Constantine's sons was next to him at his death.

The *Death of Constantine* logically concluded the narrative of Constantine's life in both the set gifted in Paris and the one completed at the order of Cardinal Francesco Barberini in Rome. The three Rubensian episodes discussed in detail above addressed most directly political theories about the domain of secular power. The *Baptism* expounded the dogma of the Church. Its selection for the presentational moment of the gift was meant to enhance the chances of the French to persuade the papacy of their orthodoxy. At the same time, the *Death of Constantine* may potentially have been disliked by the papacy because of its statement about the transfer of secular power enacted by Constantine.

The Foundation of Constantinople *and* Translatio Imperii *in the 1620s in Rome*

The issue of the origin of the temporal power of the papacy remained as critical as ever around the time of the papal legation led by Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Paris in 1625. Doubts about the inauthenticity of the document of the Donation of Constantine did not necessarily eliminate Constantine's role as the founder of papal secular power. Supporters of the Constantinian cause, instead of referring to the document of the Donation, considered the foundation of Constantinople and Constantine's transfer to the new city as evidence of the entitlement of the papacy to dictate secular matters in the West. In addition, as they argued, the *translatio imperii* of 800 could have been instituted only on the premise of the preexistence of such papal authority; its successful implementation proved that indeed the papacy had possessed temporal power, the source of which could have stemmed only from Constantine at the time of his transfer to

Constantinople.

The *Life of Constantine* tapestry set participated in this dialogue about the origin of papal temporal power. In 1625, when the French court offered the seven pieces to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the Barberini had held the papal seat for about two years. During these first two years of the pontificate of Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini), major commissions were designed for the celebration of the Jubilee of 1625. One of the significant interventions for this occasion was the restoration of the Lateran Triclinium, or rather, its sole extant wall (figs. VI. 27, 28a).[522] The Barberini restoration of the Triclinium has been excellently studied by Ingo Herklotz. [523] However, this chapter expands on the present scholarship by putting forward two ideas: (1) that the restoration was part of an ampler process of arguing for the Constantinian origin of the temporal power through the *translatio imperii ad Orientem*, and (2) that the reception of the Triclinum restoration in Paris may have motivated the French court to offer the *Constantine* tapestries as gift to the Barberini.

The medieval architectural relic of the Lateran Triclinium, once a large reception and banquet hall of the old Lateran Palace, was relevant to the Barberini because of its location and mosaic decoration. The Lateran area was a Constantinian site par excellence and the original historical seat of the papacy in Rome. The Triclinium had been erected by Leo III, the very pope who crowned Charlemagne, and its top-right mosaic ornamentation, still in place but in a fragmentary condition in 1625, had been

[522] The current decoration of the Triclinium presens the restoration of the monument commissioned by Pope Benedict XIV in 1743.
[523] Ingo Herklotz, "Francesco Barberini, Nicolo Alemanni, and the Lateran Triclinium of Leo III: An Episode in the Restoration and Seicento Medieval Studies," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 40 (1995): 175-196.

traditionally interpreted as a tribute to the political union between the patron-pope and Charlemagne (fig. VI. 29). An enthroned St. Peter distributes the ecclesiastical and imperial insignia to Leo III and Charlemagne respectively. The image shows the papacy and the Frankish emperor in a relationship indicative of the problematic definition of the segregation of power in the West. The issue of the power-balance still persisted in 1625 although inclining more and more toward the side of Western European secular rulers, to the detriment of the papacy. As a counterbalance, the papacy endeavored to update historical evidence that redressed the situation.

The subtle political implications that the Barberini sought to pursue with the restoration of the Lateran Triclinium undertaking became transparent through the financial support they gave at the same time to a literary work meant to explain and justify this Barberini project. The accompanying book, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (1625), was composed by Nicolò Alemanni, the custodian of the Vatican library at the time.[524] A series of engravings attached to the book—made by the prolific engraver Matthaus Greuter—record the Triclinium prior to and after the Barberini renovation (figs. VI. 28a, b). The sharp contrast between the two phases depends not just on the addition of architectural elements or the Barberini bees, but, most significantly, on the addition of the top-left scene (fig. VI. 30). The ruined state of the decoration, visible in the print representing the mosaic prior to the restoration, is evident in the empty field. The print representing the restored mosaic demonstrates how the seventeenth-century artists subsequently designed Christ handling the keys to Pope Sylvester and the banner to Constantine. According to Alemanni, the right panel of the mosaic still preserved

[524] The issue had only 200 copies.

inscriptions that made the identification of the personages as St. Peter, Leo III, and Charlemagne unequivocal.[525] For the top-left scene, clearly conceived as a pendant to that on the right, Alemanni tried to persuade the reader of the existence of antique sources—presumably preserved in the Vatican and perusable at the discretion of the author—that illustrated the episode exactly as remodeled.[526] The lack of integral inscriptions in the restored scene, along with Alemanni's discussion of the confusion created by this lack in identifying correctly all the figures in the scene, was most probably meant to give the impression of an authentic reconstruction. In fact, as Ingo Herklotz has already noted, the mosaic panel was a Barberini interpolation.

Alemanni's ample description of the *translatio imperii* images clarifies the motivation behind the intervention in the mosaic decoration.[527] As one can grasp from Alemanni's explanation, for the Church, the preserved scene of the medieval Triclinium alluded to the creation of the Roman emperor Charlemagne when Leo III decided to transfer the secular political power from East to West. The scene on the opposing side of

[525] There are interventions in this scene as well noticeable especially in the three keys of St. Peter.

[526] "Planè si quid minus vel studio antiquitatis, vel autoritate tanti Cardinalis fuisset, de singulari vetustati monumento actum iam esset. Itaque publici operis memoriam, incredibili studio perquisitam, summa felicitate inventam, in Vaticanam Biobliothecam inferri iussit, ne restaurati huius operis testimonium, vel fides ab exteris, posterisque aliquando desideraretur Hac minime poenitendam Antiquarij operam contulerunt in eam Apsidis partem, quae omnino defluxerat, restituendam." And to give more weight to his source, Alemanni commences the description of the mosaics by emphasizing that they were the result of Leo III's commission: "Leo autem Pontifex nescio quid historiae superiorum temporum hoc loco repetivit, & cum suo Pontificatu, rerumque suarum eventu commisit." Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (Romae: Haeredem Bartholomaei Zannetti, 1625), 57- 58.

[527] "Geminae quippe tabulae sunt, altera dextrorsum, sinistrorsum altera collocata. Tres in utraque tabula personae; aliae nituntur genibus, duo pro tribunali sedent, Christus videlicet parte dextera, sinistra Petrus Apsotolorum princeps; suus utrique Pontifex hinc, inde Imperator submittit genua; Christo Sylvester, & Constantinus; Petro Leo, & Carolus. Horum pro sua quisque conditione ab illis sumit isignia;...Scilicet imaginum illarum autor sic intelligi voluit: ab utroque illo Imperatore Pontifices eos divino nutu in dignitatem assertos; Leonemque III. Ita à Carolo Magno in integrum esse restitutum, quaemadmodum postliminio revocatum à Costantino Imperatore Sylvestrum. Contrà, Imperatores, ijsdem Pontificibus, Imperium obtinuisse: Constantinum quidem, postquam à Sylvestro salutari est fonte initiatus, in Imperio confirmatum, designatumque divinitus Ecclesiae Christianae defensorem; Carolum verò secundùm Deum à Petro Apostolorum maximo, hoc est Ecclesia Romana, Caesarem renunciatum, & vindicem cooptatum fuisse." Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus,* 58-9.

the Triclinium, a Barberini invention, explained the very reason for the need for a *translatio imperii* in 800 AD. Constantine had been divinely inspired to embrace Christianity at the hands of Pope Sylvester and in order to avoid any interference in spiritual matters he had relocated his imperial capital to the newly founded city of Constantinople. Therefore, the *translatio imperii*, traditionally associated with the creation of Charlemagne as emperor, was, in Alemanni's vision, a dual process. The transfer of the imperial seat, in other words of secular power, from Rome to Constantinople in the fourth century was followed almost five hundred years later by the transfer in the opposite direction, from Constantinople to the West. To adopt Cesare Rasponus' terminology employed in his laudatory comments on Alemanni's book, the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* means the first transfer, whereas the *translatio imperii ad Occidentem* means the second.[528]

Alemanni aspired to eliminate any ambiguity with regard to the meaning of the restored decoration of the Triclinium. Afraid of possible misinterpretations of the Constantinian scene, he took pains to establish the identity of all three personages. The cruciform halo of Christ, as well as the inscription displayed to Constantine's left, were self-explanatory. Because the third figure, shown kneeling and about to receive the keys from Christ, could easily have been equated with St. Peter, Alemanni examined why it could be only St. Sylvester.[529] Even though a transaction between Constantine and St.

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[528] Cesare Rasponus, *De Basilica et Patriarchio Lateranensi* (Romae: Typis Ignatij de Lazzeris, 1656), 340-1. In this chapter, the focus is on the *translatio imperii ad Orientem*. The terminological distinction between *ad Orientem* in 330's AD and *ad Occidentem* in 800 AD will be kept throughout the chapter. Whenever the term *translatio imperii* is used without the geographical or temporal parameters, it refers to the whole theory.

[529] "Sylvestro imago non Petri. Nimirum a consilio Leonis, nedum ab historiae veritate longe is abit, rupto, vel ex uno illo clavium, quas gerit, inditio argumentum accipere certissimum sibi videtur, ut in Sylvestri

Peter could signal the Constantinian vows to the papacy in perpetuity, Alemanni was interested in showing not an abstracted meaning but the concrete historical event that had generated the *translatio imperii*. Thus, the decoration of the Triclinium arch presented a perfect power balance: Constantine founded the Easter Empire by moving to Constantinople, whereas Leo III translated imperial power back in the West on the shoulders of Charlemagne.

Even without the aid of Alemanni's textual gloss, this message on the Triclinium was conveyed by means of the inscriptions affixed below the *translatio* scenes, most probably attributable to Alemanni himself.[530] The feedback loop between the *translatio imperii* and the *urbi pax publica* derived from the *translatio*. Essentially, an alliance between popes and emperors acknowledged the papal authority in secular matters and thus led to peace.[531] In the years when the renovation was underway, a most delicate negotiation involving the papacy and Catholic royalty was reaching an agreement on the Valtelline. To this end, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the sponsor of the Triclinium project, traveled to France and Spain in 1625-6. The right of the popes to pacify diverse secular parties had been traditionally understood by the papacy as derived from the Constantinian conferral of papal temporal power. Seventeenth-century epigonic pro-

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imagine, non illum, sed Petrum intelligat. Nec animadaverit quantum in hac tabula provide auctoris solertiam offendat, qui Petrum quem in apsidis loculamento clavium compotem inter apostolos pinxerit, hic eundem quasi Imperatore Constantino, in eam calvium possesionem missum ostendat. Haec quidem ex ipsa tabula desumere licet. Sed. alliunde intelligat, qui de hac Sylvestri imagine aliter sentit, quam absurdum Petro habitum imponat, quam remotum ab co tempore, quo traditas sibi a Christo Domino claves accepit, quam alienum a dignitate, quam ab auctoritate abhorrens." Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus*, 59-60.

[530] Ingo Herklotz expressed the same opinion. Herklotz, "Francesco Barberini," 179, n. 18.

[531] "Franciscus S. Agathae Diaconus Cardinalis Barberinus Tricliniij à Leone Tertio Romano Pontefice constricti…partem hanc illustriorem, in qua utraque Imperij Romani translation, redditaque Urbi pax publica continetur, parietibus hinc inde sussulsit, camere museum restauravit, labansque olim dexterum apsidis emblema antiquariorum diligentiae coloribus exceptum… Anno Iubilei MDCXXV." Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus*, 57.

Donation treatises still enlisted it. In one of the last treatises devoted to the defense of the Donation, Gherardo Bosselli 's *Della donatione del magno Costantino fatta alla Chiesa romana* (1640), the author emphatically concluded with a corollary on the right of the pope to play the diplomatic role of the pacifier.[532] On the other hand, those who were wary of the Donation, but who still sought the Constantinian origin of the papacy could claim the same right through the *translatio imperii*. Indeed, the inscriptions of the Triclinium celebrating the Barberini undertaking formulated a similar call.

Despite the fact that the renovations of the Lateran Triclinium integrated abusively a previously inexistent scene, the Barberini promoted themselves as faithful observers of historical veracity. Contemporaries close to Pope Urban VIII noted that the Barberini revered Cesare Baronius, his work, and his commitment to historical accuracy.[533] While by modern standards, Baronius' criteria for sorting out the valid historical sources from the dubious ones may seem questionable, Baronius' expertise made a lasting impression. His dismissal of the document of the Donation as inauthentic appeared the most efficacious argument from within the orthodox Catholic milieu. The absence of any visual representation of the Donation of Constantine in the Constantinian cycles commissioned by the Barberini implies that the Barberini consented officially to such a view. While there were new attempts to defend the Donation formulated during the reign of Pope Urban VIII and dedicated to the pontiff, none of these were ever published. Nicolò Alemanni took the time to transcribe the Greek Edict of Constantine—which was nothing other than a different version of the Donation—and translate it into

[532] "Tocca al Papa lò sforzare i Rè I Principi a deporre l'Armi, e far pace, & hà Potenza per castigalrli se non l'ubbidicono." Gherardo Bosselli, *Della donatione del magno Costantino fatta alla Chiesa romana* (Bologna: per Nicolò Tebaldini, 1640), 212.
[533] Felice Contelori, Barb. Lat. 2426, BAV.

Latin.[534] On the other hand, Gabriel Panatta endeavored, in his *De Vera Donatione Constantini*, to revive the practice of defending the document by invoking many previous historical confirmations of the Donation.[535] However appreciative of the quality of these works the Barberini may have been, the fact that they were never published shows that the Barberini made a point not to offer a direct endorsement of the Donation. At the same time, the careful fabrication of evidence for publicizing the *translatio imperii* on the Lateran Triclinium demonstrates that the Barberini investment in the Constantinian source of the papal temporal power led them, on occasion, to compromise the high standards of historical veracity that Baronius strove to maintain. To be effective visual rhetoric, the *translatio imperii* doctrine had to be presented in a legible manner. Its premise lay in Constantine's transfer of the imperial seat to Constantinople. The physical event that facilitated the translation was the foundation of Constantinople, an event whose veracity was beyond question. The foundation of the New Rome was an episode that provoked less controversy even than the *translatio imperii* despite its factual historical synonymy with the first phase of the *translatio imperii*, the *translatio imperii ad Orientem*. Thus, the foundation of Constantinople could plausibly stand for the Donation and become its proxy in the latter's absence.

The topic of Constantine's abandonment of Rome for Constantinople seems to have been quite popular in the Italian courts in the first decades of the seventeenth

[534] Alemanni's expertise in Greek studies was highly regarded as he was of Greek origins.
[535] Gabriel Panatta, *De Vera Donatione Constantini*, Barb. Lat. 1621; Panatta's manuscript treatise is datable to the papacy of Urban VIII due to the dedication of the work to this pontiff. In addition, Panatta's treatise has a precious binding adorned with the Barberini bees and sun. Other anonymous manuscript treatises are preserved (for instance, *Trattato in difesa della Donazione fatta dal Gran Constantino alla Chiesa Romana nella persona di S. Silvestro Pontefice Romano in 3 libri divisi*. (17th century), Barb. Lat. 4602. fol. 116-165).

century. Alessandro Tassoni, one of the great literary figures of his time, and one who lived at the papal court for fifteen years between 1603-1618, noticed that the subject was frequently discussed amongst contemporary literati. His *Dieci libri di pensieri diversi*, first published in 1620 after his departure from Rome, was evidently also informed by his experience in papal Rome.[536] Tassoni offers incredible insights into the less conventional forms of recording the intellectual life of the period as his book is a collection of the most prevalent conversational topics of the day. The book, designed to prepare the reader for any potential dialogue in which he might engage, promises to produce lucid and unbiased remarks for the subjects treated.[537] The *editio princeps* appeared when Tassoni resided at the court of the Prince of Savoy after his departure from Rome, but the author vouched for his *neutralità* even for the topics that fell under the rubric of "interessi di Stato." The same section that includes the question of why Constantine abandoned Rome and Italy (*Perche Costantino abandonasse l'Italia, e Roma*). Although Tassoni elaborated more on why Constantine chose Byzantia over other places, he quickly mentioned the reason for the transfer as the impossibility of ruling the extensive empire from Rome.[538] Politico-administrative explanations for the transfer to a new Rome had been occasionally suggested prior to this time but had not become mainstream. Pedro Mexia's history of the Roman emperors (*Historia imperial y cesárea*, 1545), translated into Italian by Lodovico Dolce, had clearly connected the

[536] Alessandro Tassoni, *Dieci libri di pensieri diuersi d'Alessandro Tassoni, ne'quali per via di quisiti con nuoui fondamenti, e ragioni si trattano le più curiose materie naturali, morali, ciuili, poetiche, istoriche, e d'altre facoltà, che soglian venire in discorso fra caualieri, e professori di lettere* (Carpi: Appresso G. Vaschieri, 1620).
[537] Although it may seem that the employment of the author at the court of the Prince of Savoy would have obliged Tassoni to write in the genre of pedagogical literary works on court comportment, the *Pensieri* does not readily fall into this category.
[538] Such a statement is easily recognized as accurate today.

event of the transfer exclusively with Constantine's preoccupation with domination in the Eastern provinces of the empire.[539] Voicing a similar thought decades later, Tassoni urged an impartial judgment of historical evidence. Tassoni's pragmatic perspective on the subject of the translation to Constantinople excluded any conclusion regarding whether Constantine intended to create temporal power for the papacy. Tassoni's opinions about Constantine in general were formulated elsewhere, in his manuscript composition *Degli annali ecclesiastici e secolari*.[540] In his analysis of the Constantinian period, Tassoni made no mention of the Donation and radically challenged the contemporary view that Constantine gifted sumptuous material goods to the Church. His effort to publish such an alternative view of ecclesiastical history without any doubt bothered the Curia, and in the end it failed. Even though Tassoni confessed that Constantine "fù magnifico, e spendido," his convictions about Constantine's relationship with the Church could not bring him much admiration at the papal court, especially when the gifts offered by Constantine and the transfer to Constantinople were increasingly cultivated by the Church as unproblematic means of asserting the Constantinian origin of the papacy.[541] Nevertheless, the ideas formulated in the *Dieci Libri di Pensieri* enjoyed great dissemination. The book was published four times in the 1620's, indicating that

[539] Pedro Mexia's pro-secular opinions, inclusively on the transfer to Constantinople, may have contributed to Mexia's nomination as the official imperial chronicler by Charles V in 1548. Pedro Mexia (Italianized as Pietro Messia), *Vite di tutti gl'Imperatori romani*, ed. and trans. Lodovico Dolce (Venetia: Apresso Olivier Alberti, 1583). Lodovico Dolce imposed a structure upon Mexia's text. Mexia had written the lives one after another, whereas Dolce found necessary to group the lives of the emperors in different sections whose beginnings were demarked by significant historical events. In Dolce's version, each group opens with a note to the reader. Dolce separated the series of Roman emperors up to Constantine from the series starting with Constantine because Constantine was the first Christian emperor and moved the imperial seat to Constantinople. The section begun with Constantine continues up to Charlemagne. The next historical demarcation for the imperial lives used by Dolce is the transfer of the empire with Charlemagne. See, Mexia (trad. Dolce), 183.

[540] Chigi F.V.113, BAV.

[541] For this issue, see Chapter II and Chapter IV.

some of those indulging in “hot” conversational topics were familiar with a geo-political explanation of the foundation of and transfer to Constantinople by Constantine.

Despite alternative explanations for the transfer to Constantinople such as Tassoni's, the supporters of the papal cause continued to propagate the idea that by this action, Constantine had meant to establish the temporal power of the papacy, and thus the translatio imperii of 800 exemplified the most conspicuous consequence of Constantine's transfer. The restoration of the Lateran Triclinium under the Barberini represented a significant component of this process. The emphasis on the implications of the foundation of and translation to Constantinople by Constantine had found a place in the papal policy on the defense of the Donation at least from the beginning of the sixteenth century, but the subject became more diffused when the defense on the Donation became increasingly unproductive and there was an interest in finding a proxy for the Donation. We shall see now how the tension inherent in the debate on the Donation led to singularizing the foundation of Constantinople.

The Foundation of Constantinople *and* Translatio Imperii *in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*[542]

Since the early stages of the debate on the Donation, the keen interest of papal supporters in promoting the foundation of Constantinople, and Constantine's relocation to it in order to illustrate that the emperor stipulated the transfer of power through his donation led to the diffusion of these ideas beyond the realm of intellectual debate. As already noted in Chapter II, since the first decade of the sixteenth century, a widely circulating text such as the *Mirabilia Urbis* popularized a summary of the document of the Donation that concluded with Constantine's transfer to Constantinople as a consequence of the donation of Rome and the occidental provinces to Pope Sylvester.[543] The author of the summary did not seek to engage in dialectal controversy but his nuanced reference to the event of the imperial transfer as essential and irrefutable evidence may be understood as a clear attempt to redress the reputation of the Donation

[542] This section does not intend to be an exhaustive reference to the period sources dealing with the issue of *translatio imperii*. While it offers abundant evidence and points out the significance of the issue for the period, it focuses primarily on how the development of the debate at the papal court and in France pertains to the *Life of Constantine* tapestry set. The rest of this section traces the usage of the event of the foundation of Constantinople as part of the argument on the validity of the Donation. In addition, it emphasizes the relevance of the foundation of Constantinople in the debate on papal prerogatives between France and Rome before, during, and shortly after the visit of the papal legation to 1625. As the idea of the foundation of Constantinople as a proxy for the Donation of Constantine is here presented for the first time, it obliges me to present the argument in a larger historical context. By doing so, it becomes clear that the Barberini maximized visually the event of the foundation of Constantinople, an event that had been already predicated in texts on the debate on the Donation. The tapestry set, the mosaics of the Lateran Triclinium, as well as new related images are invoked along with textual sources. The role of the textual sources is to elucidate certain crucial aspects of why and how the above described imagery was created and employed, and the different opinions on the foundation of Constantinople and the *translatio imperii* in Paris and Rome. However, those who prefer to remain in the visual realm and do not wish to embark on such an excursus are invited to proceed directly with the next section.

[543] "qua romane urbis & omnis Italiae, oimq occidentaliu provincias, regiones, loca, civitates & insulas, que circa Italia sunt patri nostro Silvestro, cunctisq; successoribus suis sub iure romane ecclesie pro affectu largimur & donamus in Christo humani generis redemptore. Nos autem imperium nostre transferimus ad orientem, in byzantium civitatem, quam ampliarsi fecimus, & a nostro nomine Constantinopolim appellati," *Mirabilia Urbis*, Roma, 1504, Ciii. For my discussion of the importance of the 1510s *Mirabilia Urbis*, see Chapter II. As already noted, scholars have not hitherto pointed out the importance of the *Mirabilia Urbis* genre for the Donation controversy.

in the eyes of a larger audience.

Despite the fact that subscribers to the papal policy had adduced the event of the foundation of a new Rome for the emperor so that both the pope and the emperor could rule in his respective Rome without interfering with the other, the potential of the foundational event surfaced in the historical critique of the Donation of Constantine only in the late sixteenth century. The necessity to refute the immediate claims advanced by the Donation document initially prevailed over details of the argumentation. So the problem had appeared to Lorenzo Valla when he assumed the task of repudiating the Donation back in 1440. His method of dismantling the document of the Donation by pointing out absurd chronological discrepancies within the body of its text prevented him from categorically singling out the rhetorical construction of the episode of the foundation of Constantinople as proof of Constantine's act of donation. With regard to the city of Constantinople, Valla's critique referred first of all to the maladroitness of the document's author in claiming anachronistically the preeminence of the ecclesiastical seat of Rome over Constantinople when the latter had not yet been founded and Constantine had obviously transferred to Byzantia and not to Constantinople.[544] For Valla, the fact that the succession of events as outlined in the document implied that Constantinople had not existed at the moment of Constantine's fictional donation sufficed to undermine the idea of the transfer of power to Pope Sylvester. Nevertheless, Valla acknowledged the significance given by the papacy to the creation of the "Latin" emperor. It was Valla's pleasure to reiterate what he characterized as the ruthless stratagems of the papacy for self-empowering, stripping away the Greek emperors and locking Latin emperors on the

[544] Valla, *On the Donation*, 44-46.

day of their coronation into an agreement that obliged them to return favors, inclusively renewing donations, to popes.[545] According to Valla, the origin of this problem could be identified during the papacy of Stephan II (752-757), which would mean that Valla considered the confirmation of the Donation by Pepin, Charlemagne's father, in 756 as the inception moment of the Latin Empire.[546] However, the parenthetical comment attached to Valla's discussion about the date of the *translatio imperii*, where he qualifies his assertion with the sentence "I believe" may equally allude to his lack of certitude.[547] The usage of the title "Latin emperor" (*imperatorem Latinum*) for the rulers preceding Charlemagne shows that, indeed, Valla, the master critic of anachronistic terminology, fell himself victim to it even as he denounced it.[548]

Neither did the authors who consented to or responded to Valla's *Declamatio* during most of the sixteenth century point out how the foundation of Constantinople could serve as a pertinent proxy and the last means of defending the Donation of Constantine. Protestant admirers of Valla's thesis such as Luther, rather than reanalyzing the document, adopted Valla's critique to contest vividly the papal authority to interfere in secular matters in general. With this concern at the fore, the implications of the *translatio imperii* were examined only through events commencing with the year 800 by which the

[545] Valla, *On the Donation*, 82. The most recent example in Valla's time was the crowning of Sigismund by Pope Eugene in Rome, on which occasion the pope had "extorted" a donation from the new emperor.
[546] Even though Valla did not clearly specify which pope Stephan, his reference to the Donation of Pepin elucidates which one.
[547] The phrase reads: "For who is unaware that the Latin emperor was gratuitously installed by a supreme pontiff, Stephen (I believe)?" Valla, *On the Donation*, 82.
[548] Taking into account that Valla was writing for Alfonso the King of Naples, he may have been enticed to refer to a larger category of rulers interacting with popes. As Pepin had been only a king and confirmed the Donation in front of the pope as subsequently emperors were asked to do, he represented a valid precedent for enlarging the category of Christian rulers so that Valla's patron belonged to it.

papacy had planned “to enslave” emperors.[549] As the Holy Roman Emperors were currently German, frustrations over the papacy’s claim to political supremacy emerged initially and most strongly in German lands (for example, in Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *De Translatione Imperii Romani ad Germanos*, 1566). On the other hand, in Rome, as demonstrated in Chapter III, Gregory XIII hoped to conclude the long sixteenth-century debate on the Donation with its official confirmation in the 1582 Post-Tridentine edition of the *Decretum Gratiani*. In the revised edition of the *Decretum*, the transfer to Constantinople persisted as a crucial feature of Constantine's act of donation.[550] However, up to 1582, one may deduce, the energies of the papal supporters channeled towards rehabilitating the document rather than seeking proxies.

For some papal acolytes, when reasonable arguments to defend the historical document of the donation vanished, and as the papal prerogatives had to be preserved, the need to single out a genuine historical event as a proxy for Constantine’s act of donation became concrete. Despite the official stance of the papacy, some important figures of the Curia such as Cesare Baronius and Roberto Bellarmino continued to openly express their doubts about the authenticity of the document even after 1582. Nevertheless, such doubts did not lead to questioning the extent of papal power but rather to explaining it through the medieval theory of its divine derivation. On the other hand, as previously mentioned, later royal and imperial historical donations were retained as genuine even by those who contested the Donation of Constantine. At the same time, Constantine’s munificence towards the Church expressed through many material gifts was beyond question. A

[549] Matthias Flacius Ilyricus, *De Transaltione Imperii Romani ad Germanos* (Basilea, 1566), 20.
[550] *Decretum Gratiani*, Distinctio 96.

similar status was enjoyed by the Constantinian deed of transferring the imperial power from Rome to Constantinople. Not only did such an event advertise the imperial tribute to the spiritual power but it created a situation that allowed the papacy to claim its authority in restoring imperial power in Rome, and, on a larger scale, in interfering in secular matters.

In the section devoted to Constantine in the *Annales Ecclesiastici* (1592), Cesare Baronius explored the move of the imperial capital to Constantinople as a transfer of the temporal power, which left Rome with its sacred preeminence.[551] If with regard to the endowment of the Church by Constantine Baronius strove to maintain a cautious distance from connotations of secular power, with regard to the *translatio imperii* in 800 AD—a political act derived from the Constantinian heritage—he had no doubt that it was in the pope's authority to engender it. Therefore, when Pope Leo III conferred the empire upon Charlemagne by transferring it from the Greeks to the Franks, in Baronius' view he was simply exercising his right.[552] Baronius dealt with the *translatio imperii* in the segment dedicated to Charlemagne in the ninth volume of his *Annales.* The volume was dedicated in an act of propaganda to the French King Henry IV of Navarra who had recently converted to Catholicism and, as a consequence, received his royal crown from the pope. Although Baronius stated that the divine origin of the papacy made it unnecessary for Constantine to legitimize its authority, his validating of the *translatio imperii* could still create confusion about the role of the pope in the wake of the transfer of Constantine to Constantinople.

[551] Baronius, *Annales*, vol. 3, 370 e-d.
[552] Baronius, *Annales*, vol.9, 800, 6-8.

The historical approach of the Oratorian Baronius was complemented by the theologically informed theories on the domain of papal power set forth by the Jesuit Roberto Bellarmino. Aligned with Baronius's view on the matter of the Donation of Constantine, Bellarmino investigated the intricacies of the *translatio imperii* in his book *De translatione imperii Romani* (1589) written in response to the treatise on the subject composed in 1566 by Matthias Flacius Illyricus—the same author to whose ecclesiastical history Baronius had to respond with his *Annales*. While Baronius used language that fostered the idea of a conflation of the East and West empires following the *translatio imperii* in 800 AD, Bellarmino recognized that the two empires coexisted after the coronation of Charlemagne. Bellarmino's defense of the *translatio imperii* was based on his theory of the indirect power of the papacy to intervene in secular matters owing to its spiritual derivation.[553] Bellarmino's concept of indirect power dissatisfied not only certain Catholic supporters but those especially who opposed any papal intrusion in secular affairs.

Baronius' and Bellarmino's theses incited immediate responses. In particular cases, the reply came in the company of physical attacks on their books themselves, as we have seen in Chapter V in the case of the bonfire prepared at the order of the French Parliament for Bellarmino's *Tractatus de podestate* not long after its publication in 1610.[554] During the same year, in France, following the assassination of Henry IV and the rise of his son Louis XIII to the royal throne under the regency of his mother Maria de

[553] As mentioned in Chapter V, he postulated his view on indirect power for the first time in his *Disputationes de controversiis Christiane fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos* (1586), and subsequently in *Tractatus de potestate summi ponteficis in rebus temporalibus* (1610). See also Vian, *La donazione*, 154.
[554] See Chapter V, p. 216; Vian, *La donazione*, 154

Medici, a systematic critique was offered by Philippe de Mornay. We have become familiar with Philippe de Mornay, the "pope of the Huguenots," and his *The Mysterie of Inquitie: That is to say, The Historie of the Papacie* (1610) in the previous chapter.[555] Here, the interest in his work lies in his opinion on the event of the foundation of Constantinople. While summarizing different views on the Donation of Constantine, Mornay aptly observed how his adversaries had used the foundation of Constantinople and Constantine's transfer to the "New Rome" to argue for the benefits bestowed upon the Church even if the Donation itself was apparently refuted. [556] However, Mornay emphasized that though Constantine relocated to Constantinople, he allotted Rome to one of his sons. It followed then, Mornay asserted, the presupposition that a pope could exercise secular power was contradicted by the fact many emperors after Constantine's son, up to Charlemagne, had co-existed in Rome with popes. Mornay considered equally inadequate the idea that the pope had the power to confer empires as he pleased. Connecting the issues of the Donation with *translatio*, Mornay mockingly projected, retrospectively, the implications of the latter on the former:

> Doubtlesse Sylvester had never gone to schoole with the Iesuites, where he might have learned, That it belonged properly to him to have given the Empire unto Constantine.[557]

One the one hand, Mornay's comments focused on subverting the pretentions of the papacy to an *a priori* primacy as postulated in the latest theories of medieval reminiscences that intended to replace Constantine with the incomprehensible nature of God as the origin of the temporal power of the papacy. On the other hand, he identified

[555] See Chapter V, p. 217-218.
[556] Mornay dealt with the issue under the entry *Sundrie reasons summarily rehearsed, to overthrow that pretended donation of Constantine unto the Church of Rome.* Mornay, *The Mysterie of Inquitie*, 18-32.
[557] Mornay, *The Mysterie of Inquitie*, 20.

the compelling connotations that the papal fief could extrapolate from the transfer of power between Rome and Constantinople initiated with the foundation of the latter city.

In France, discontent with the theories of the two Roman prelates was expressed not only amongst Protestants but also in the Catholic milieu. Not long after the publication of Bellarmino's *De podestate*, an anonymous self-declared Catholic author penned a petition aimed to embolden the French royalty to take position with regard to Bellarminos's thesis.[558] The anonymous author attributed Bellarminos's audacity to the feeble political situation in France due to the regency of Maria de Medici in the aftermath of her husband's death. Lamenting France's fate, the petitioner reasoned that Bellarmino's book affronted France's liberty and that there was no time for France to dissimulate an amiable relationship with the papacy.[559] Although Bellarmino's thesis undermined the deliberations of any secular power, the author emphasized that pro-Spanish policy of the papacy of Paul V (1605-1621) led him to the conclusion that the ideas exposed in Bellarmino's book targeted France primarily.

The *translatio imperii* and foundation of Constantinople agitated the French intelligentsia once again when Nicolò Alemanni's *De Lateranensibus* (1625) familiarized them with papal policy on the subject, as reflected in the contemporary renovation of the Lateran Triclinium (1625). Since its publication occurred while Cardinal Francesco

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[558] *Risvegliamento alli Rè, alla Regina Regente Madre del Rè à Principi del Sangue à tutti parlam.ti Magistratti, officiali, et buoni et fedeli Vassalli della Corona di Francia Contro il Libro della Podestà Temporale del Papa, posto novam.te in luce dal Card.le Belarmino Gesuita*. Chigi O.III.38. fol. 346-367. Internal historical references allow dating the text "not long after 1610." The author asked for the burning of Bellarmino's book at the stake.

[559] "Nò nò Francia, non è più tempo di disimulare perrioche, come Pindaro ruppe la Pace accordata trà Greci et Troia per un sol colpo lanciato contra Menelao; medem.te questo Cardinale per lo colpo, che'gli ha tirato contro la libertà Francese, la quale egli non hà eccetuatta dalla servitù de Pontefici; si rende ogni amicicia della S.a Sede pienna di timore, e d'ingano." Chigi O.III.38. fol. 348.

Barberini was in France, reproaches could be addressed directly to him. While we know that Nicholas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the well-known French scholar and Rubens' fervent correspondent, did raise objections against the initiative to Francesco Barberini, the French diplomatists could very well vocalize a similar discontent.[560] While the necessity of written responses to Alemanni may have been immediate, the literary production took some time to materialize. On the other hand, the meaning of the decoration on the Lateran Triclinium became familiar thanks to Giovanni Severano's *Le Sette Chiese* (1630), a work equally dedicated to Francesco Barberini. [561] Severano summarized Alemanni's text in Italian and reproduced the two engravings by Greuter illustrating the *translatio imperii* (figs. VI. 27, 28). [562] *Le sette chiese*, which aimed to enhance devotion and artistic "connoisseurship" during the established pilgrimage practice of visiting the seven churches of Rome, succeeded in reaching a larger audience that did not necessarily engaged in sophisticated debates. The message of imperial submission to papal authority was efficiently propagated but obviously disliked by proponents of the supremacy of secular power. The French had to find a better way to

[560] Peiresc corresponded with Francesco Barberini since 1618 and during the latter's visit to Avignon on his way back from Paris to Rome in 1625 offered him the so-called Barberini ivory (a Byzantine ivory panel showing what was believed to be Constantine astride). Considering carefully the circumstances, it seems plausible that Peiresc's gesture was tied to the exchange of Constantinian symbols between Paris and Rome. On the broad scope of Nicholas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc's interests, see Stéphane Cordier, *Nicolas-Claude Peiresc* (Paris: Diffusion, Nouveau quartier latin, 1977); Peter N. Miller, *Peiresc's Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
[561] Severano, *Le sette chiese*, 550-558.
[562] "Per significar dunque la prima Transaltione fatta da Constantino, posse quelle Imagini S. Leone nella facciata destra del sopradetto arco della Tribuna : e per dinotar la seconda, fata da lui a Carlo, pose l'altre, che habbiamo detto nella facciata sinista. Se bene ancora quelle della destra convengono in qualche parte à questa medessima Translatione, & alla Reintegrazione de Pontefice, face(n)do un Paralello di S. Silvestro, e S. Leone, e di Costantino, e Carlo Magno: poiche, si come S. Silvestro esssendo fuggito, fù richiamato, e riposte in Roma pacificamente da Costantino; cosi S. Leone da Carlo Magno: e sicome Costantino dopo il Battesimo fù confermato nell'Imperio, e fatto Difensore della Chiesa; cosi Carlo dopo quella pia attione di proteggere il Vicario di Christo, e successore di S. Pietro, fù dal medessimo creato Imperatore, e dichairato difensore della medessima Chiesa." Severano, *Le sette chiese*, 550-558.

oppose papal "propaganda."

In a France increasingly willing to challenge the papacy, the demands formulated by the 1625 papal legation in Paris, along with the intellectual fermentation provoked by Alemanni's book, newly invigorated the discussion on the prerogatives in relation to the disputed Donation and the dual *translatio imperii*. In April 1626, a few months after the departure of Francesco Barberini from Paris but in relation to the same negotiations for a peace treaty in which the Cardinal was preparing to meet the Spanish King in Madrid, the Sorbonne issued a Decree on papal authority. The Decree pronounced the temporal power of the papacy, as well as the right to deprive secular rulers of their states, false and contrary to the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore, the Decree condemned the inimical activities of the papacy against peace. While the papacy could not be otherwise than displeased with the Decree from the very beginning, a refutation was published only much later, by a certain Dottor S. Maria in 1642 (*Veri confini delle potestà dominanti e spirituale, e temporale*). Dottor S. Maria's book was not dedicated to Urban VIII but to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. Systematically rejecting the propositions of the Sorbonne Decree, the author touched upon the historical relationship between the French and the papacy. He gave credit to the French for helping the papacy to rid the Italian peninsula of the Barbarians in the eighth century but simultaneously attributed to the French an innate antipathy against the papacy.[563] Dealing with the contemporary period, S. Maria proclaimed that if Louis XIII continued to treat with the "heretics," which is to say the Huguenots, Urban VIII had to threaten him with excommunication and the

[563] Such was S. Maria's hatred for the French. He strove to find maleficent French connections in any aspect of Christianity. According to him, Pilate was French. Dottor S. Maria, *Veri confini delle potestà dominanti e spirituale, e temporale* (Colonia, 1642), 9.

deprivation of his crown. S. Maria's rigid resort to medieval politics did not gain acceptance with Urban VIII's counselors as is evident from the censorship of S. Maria's manuscript treatise by Felice Contelori—the new custodian of the Vatican library after the death of Alemanni in 1626 and one of Urban VIII's closest advisors.[564] Contelori, who frequently defended papal rights in secular matters, realized that such opinions were obsolete and could create more trouble than good. The succinct Sorbonne Decree mentioned, specifically, not the issues of the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* and *Occidentem,* but their consequences. In his rebuttal, S. Maria incorporated the Sorbonne Devcree but, as his response focused on the French, he assumed the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* to be a given.[565] So it seemed to Contelori, who did not censor this section of S. Maria's tract. The papal claims remained in place but had to be adapted to the current requirements of the political scene.

In the years after Francesco Barberini's 1625 mission, Jean Morin, a French Oratorian active during the reign of Louis XIII, interpreted totally anew the theory on the *translatio imperii* which radically challenged Alemanni's, and therefore Barberini's,

[564] Felice Contelori, *Censura del libro intitolato: Vere confini delle podestà dominanti e spirituale e temporale. Autore il Dottor Santa Maria a carte*. Barb. Lat. 3150, fol. 376-7, BAV. Contelori's censorship did not get implemented. S. Maria's book was published in Cologne. Maybe S. Maria sought the patronage of the emperor in order to be exempted from censorship. The emperor evidently had his disputes with the French and may have enjoyed reading a negative opinion about them.

[565] "Mutata la Romana Monarchia di Laica in Monarchia Ecclesiastica" (S. Maria, 6). Nevertheless, he conveniently found a reason to resort on the authority of the Decretum Gratiani for proving that Constantine endowed copiously the papacy once with his transfer to Constantinople: "si come nella dist.96 al cap. Constantinus, viene riferita l'amplissima donatione, che fece Costantino all Chiesa: quando partendo per Oriente, cedete tutta l'Italia al Papa, e suoi successori (S. Maria, 58). With regard to the *translatio ad Occidentem*, S. Maria opined that the French kings received from the pope not only the Occidental empire at the beginning but France throughout the centuries. (See S. Maria, 58). Contelori disagreed on the second part of the statement (Contelori, Barb. Lat,, 3150, 376). The donations of the French kings, beginning with death of Pepin played a significant role in S. Maria's defense of the papacy's temporal authority.

views.[566] Like Louis XIII's father, Morin was a convert from Huguenotism to Catholicism who, regardless of how devout he had become as a Catholic, preserved the national interest as his foremost goal. Such a position put him at odds with the Oratorian Baronius, the top scholar of the religious order to which Morin now belonged. Morin zealously dedicated his *Histoire de la déliverance de l'Eglise Chrestienne par l'empereur Constantin* (1630) to Louis XIII. The *Histoire* has a tripartite structure, beginning with a French translation of Eusebius' *Vita Constantini*, followed by Morin's exegesis of Eusebius' text, and concluding with a book on the origin and evolution of the temporal power of the popes. By reanalyzing the Constantinian heritage, Morin launched himself into a defense of French preeminence at the papal court with respect to any other nation. As expected, the *Histoire* stirred interest in Paris and Rome.

Scholarship on the *Life of Constantine* tapestries has singled out Morin as a personality whose ideas had an impact on the final appearance of the set. Marc Fumaroli has offered a general context for Morin's work and explored the tensions between the theologian's views and those depicted in the so-called *Triumph of Rome* (fig. 13).[567] In a different vein, Pascal-François Bertrand sees a very strict connection between Morin's theses and Francesco Barberini's undertaking of completing the *Life of Constantine*. According to Pascal-François Bertrand, the six tapestry panels produced in the Barberini manufactory created a response to Jean Morin's new refutation of the Donation of

[566] Jean Morin corresponded with Cardinal Barberini for decades on various topics, such as asking for permission to borrow some of Francesco Barberini's rare manuscripts and issues of conduct at the papal court in Rome. See the correspondence attached to Jean Morin's *Life* in *Antiquitates ecclesiae orientalis, clarissimorum virorum Card. Barberini; Joh. Morini: dissertationibus epistolicis enucleatae: nunc ex ipsis autographis editae: quibus praefixa est Jo. Morini vita* (London, 1682).

[567] This piece is frequently associated with the *Life of Constantine* series that was never turned into a tapestry supposedly due to its pro-papal suggestions. Fumaroli, "Cross, Crown, and Tiara," 92. See above, n. 510.

Constantine similar to Leo X's commission of the *Life of Constantine* from Raphael.[568] However, unlike the Protestant attacks that primarily incited the commission of the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican, Morin's contestation of the Donation, as we shall see soon, did not intend to imperil the secular power of the papacy but to establish its source in legendary French kings. In addition, by 1620, when the tapestry set was produced, the impossibility for the papacy to validate the document of Donation had become absolutely clear. To combat a commonly accepted view would not have been productive for the Barberini. Despite the attention given by scholars like Marc Fumaroli and Pascal-François Bertrand to the *Histoire*, Morin's most audacious propositions have not been sufficiently examined.

Morin, rather than merely reiterating the invalidity of the Donation of Constantine, introduced ideas in his reevaluation of Eusebius' narrative of Constantine's life and critique of the Donation what may have seemed subversive at the papal court of Urban VIII. Morin set a dual goal: to claim Constantine for France by proving that Constantine's conversion happened on French territory, and to assert that the papacy possessed its temporal power thanks to the French kings. After an ample investigation into Eusebius's text, Morin reached the conclusion that the vision of the cross marked Constantine's conversion to Christianity and could have taken place only in France.[569] In this scenario, there was no doubt that Christians were fundamentally indebted to France. Morin's reinterpretation of the Constantinian *Vita* shows once again how European

[568] Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 51.
[569] "Constantine a esté declare Cesar en Angleterre, & a esté saliié Empereur & Auguste en France. Il est nay en Bithynie, & esté regeneré en France. La conversion de Constantin, qui est la fondement de la deliverance des Chretiens, a esté faicte en France, & par la France." Morin, *Histoire de la deliverance*, I, IX. He even took pains to localize the spot of the vision, somewhere near Autun in Burgundy.

parties were invested in exploiting the Constantinian legends. However, his diligent fabrication of the location of Constantine's conversion could have inspired some French and bothered the Curia, but it had little chance of make a convincing case through rational argument.

On the other hand, Morin attempted to promote the claims of the French kings by attributing to them many of the deeds that had been traditionally associated with Constantine. Still, Constantine preserved his status as an exemplum. Like Constantine who "expurgated the Church of infidels," the French kings liberated the Church from its imperial servitude for the first time. For Morin, the papacy first possessed territorial domain only with Pepin's act of donation in 754. Subsequently, the city of Rome came under papal control only with the endowment made by Charlemagne after his coronation in 800. The contestation of the donation of Constantine became necessary for Morin only for demonstrating that not Constantine but the French kings conferred temporal power upon the papacy. Even though the ceding of the Lateran Palace by Constantine to Pope Sylvester for private use seemed conceivable to Morin, he identified it as one of two pertinent Constantinian deeds misleading to the belief that Constantine had donated Rome and the West.[570] The second was the transfer of Constantine to Constantinople, because it allowed papal supporters to infer that the popes possessed the West.[571] For

[570] "De là tire sa premiere origine la Fable de la Donation de Constantin; Car ce religieux Empereur ayant transferé son Siege à Constantinople, & donné son Pails sux Papes qui en ioüyssoinent comme de leur proper; avec le temps il a esté aisé persuader qu'il acoit aussi cede la ville de Rome, & puis l'Italie." Morin, *Histoire de la deliverance*, III, XIII, VI.

[571] "On a pris de là occasion cent ans apre les bien-faicts de Chalrlemagne, de dire che Constantin avoit cede Rome a sainct Sylvestre: Car quelques-uns lisans que cet Empereur avoit donné son siege Imperial aux Pape, qu'il avoit quitté Rome pour demeurer à Constantinople; voyans aussi d'ailleurs que les Papes obtenoient une sovveraine puissance dans Rome des temps immemorial: se sont imaginez que Rome estoit la siege Imperial que Constanine avoit donné à Sainct Sylvestre, & que ce n'estoit pas seulement le Palais de Lateran." Morin, *Histoire de la déliverance*, III, XIII, IX.

Morin, the document of the donation created discontent not only with the papacy but also with the Germans. Morin concluded that the document had been forged “one hundred years after Charlemagne” as a result of the tension between the French and the Germans for supremacy in the West. As drawn, the Donation was favorable to the Germans because it lay in the pope’s power to create emperors and transfer empires. But, as Morin stated, the *translatio imperii* had no historical ground because the “true events” demonstrated conversely that the papacy received its temporal power from the French kings and Rome for the first time from Charlemagne. Morin did not negate the “donation culture” as many others did; he simply situated its origins in the Franks. The upper part of the frontispiece illustration of his book epitomizes his thesis (fig. VI. 31). Just as in the mosaic of the Lateran Triclinium, Constantine and Charlemagne appear in significant juxtaposition. However, the right register of the *Histoire* frontispiece advances no interrelationship between Constantine and Pope Sylvester I; instead, it presents Constantine's visionary experience of the Cross on French territory. The pendant image presents a visual language specific to the donation scenes: Charlemagne hands over to the pope a map of Italy. The image clearly conveys the roles of the two emperors. Constantine is the founder of *Pax Christiana*, whereas Charlemagne of the *Gloria Pontificum*. Evidently, Morin’s interest lay in promoting the crucial import of the French monarchy in the tradition of the Church. His thesis radically challenged Alemanni's exposition. In order to bolster it, Morin critically pointed out the significance of both the foundation of Constantinople and the transfer of the empire for the papal partisans.

At the same time, pro-Roman statements about Constantine’s intention in founding Constantinople continued to figure in writings of various genres. Studies of

different aspects of ancient history devoted to or inclusive of Constantine's time offered the most conspicuous occasions for addressing the topic. While some were mere pastiches of previous literary works, others endeavored to vitalize historical sources. In the 1630's, Francesco Angeloni, an intimate of the Barberini circle and of the papal court since the beginning of the century, undertook the task of enlivening the history of the Roman emperors from Julius Cesar to Constantine the Great by writing his account from scratch, based solely on numismatic evidence (*Historia Augusta*, 1641). [572] Angeloni attempted to perfect an approach that had previously been taken in the fifteenth century, particularly that of Enea Vico. Rome offered plenty of archeological material besides extant ruins, and private collections like that of the Barberini's could augment Angeloni's knowledge. Moreover, Angeloni himself was a renowned antiquarian. His Roman house on the Pincio abounded in collectible antiquities and was a significant venue of the Roman intellectual milieu.[573] His interests are reflected not only in the nature of topics he decided to devote his time to but also in the methodological sophistication with which he conspicuously hoped to produce a notable contribution to the large corpus of writing on the imperial *vite*. With a numismatic approach, Angeloni aimed to amplify already known accounts about the Roman emperors and to establish the veracity of his additions with attestable evidence. The chronological scope of his book was determined not by a lack of

[572] Francesco Angeloni, *La Historia Augusta da Giulio Cesare infino à Costantino il Magno illustrata con la verità delle antiche medaglie* (Roma, Andrea Fei: 1641). As Angeloni acknowledges the reader, he folowed the example of Enea Vico in valorizing the ancient coins.The second edition of Francesco Angeloni's book was edited by his pupil Giovanni Pietro Bellori who also expanded it with his commentaries (1685).

[573] Angeloni's mentor upon his arrival in Rome was the exquisite humanist Giovanni Battista Agucchi. Angeloni opened his collection to the public. This collection was known as the *Museo*—supposedly the first of its kind in Rome—or *studio*. See Francesco Bracciolini's poem in the opening of Angeloni's *Historia Augusta*. For Angeloni, see Pompeo De Angelis, ed., *Francesco Angeloni nella cultura del Seicento: atti del convegno, Terni 22 novembre 2006* (Terni: Thyrus, 2007).

numismatic material pertaining to emperors after Constantine but by the event that marked the division of the empire, namely the transfer of Constantine to Constantinople.[574] The theme of the last entry of the book, "Constantine in Constantinople," permitted Angeloni to accentuate that the reason of the foundation of Constantinople lay in the emperor's objective to confer Rome as an everlasting dwelling upon the papacy (*Edifica Constantinopoli, e và ad habitarvi la lasciando Roma per habitazione delli sommi pontefici).*[575]

The above-described events lacked any connection to coins, contrary to the states of Angeloni's scholarly method (fig. VI. 36). In fact, in searching for various sources to support his claim about the inauthenticity of the Donation, Valla had perspicaciously pointed out that no coin depicting Sylvester or any other pope had been in circulation, and hence, he reasoned, the claims of the papacy to have ruled over Rome were outrageous. Angeloni intuited that a numismatic history endeavoring to persuade readers that the popes became the new leaders of Rome ought to end with Constantine and his transfer to Constantinople.

The peculiarity of Angeloni's *Historia Augusta* lies in its mingling of distinctive and partially irreconcilable political ideals that were pursued in Paris and Rome during the pontificate of Urban VIII. Although Angeloni composed his opus in Rome in the

[574] The author confessed that he would have been able to trace the numismatic history of Rome for another hundred years after Constantine. Angeloni, *La Historia Augusta*, 4.
[575] "Edificato in fine Costantino per lui la Città, che chiamò dal suo nome Costantinopoli intorno al vigesimo anno del suo Imperio vi transferì la Sede Imperiale, lasciando Roma in cui riposano le ossa di Pietro, eletto da Cristo capo della sua Chiesa e dove è la riverita Sedia del Cristianesimo, e li Pontefici successori di lui dimorano: havendo Costantino havuto per mira di propagare, come fece, per tutto il Mondo, la Religione, per dar pace, Gloria, & Essaltatione alla sacrosanta, Cattolica, & Apostolica Chiesa Romana, capo, e maestra d'altre Chiese tutte, e che con l'eternità de'secoli anderà, e della sua santità perpetutamente riceverà condegni triõfi a somma gloria di Dio Padre, Figliuolo, e Spirito Santo, Amen." Angeloni, *La Historia Augusta*, 376.

1630's, he intriguingly dedicated his book to none other than to the French king Louis XIII. The ability of the French painter Nicolas Poussin, Angleoni's close friend and neighbor, to obtain from the French king a privilege of a fifteen-year period with publishing rights in France for Angleoni may have been as a pragmatic reason to dedicate the book to Louis XIII.[576] To please the dedicatee, the preambulatory paragraphs allude to the alignment of the king's deceased father Henry IV and the king himself with the Constantinian tenets. On the other hand, the book contains a frontispiece inscribed with "cum privilegio pope Urban VIII" and a 1638 papal bull approving the work. Angeloni did not limit himself, nevertheless, to showing his loyalty to papal views by means of a formulaic inclusion of these references. Concluding the series of imperial *vite* with that of Constantine the Great, Angeloni wanted to distinguish polytheist Rome from Christian Rome, with the latter beginning with Constantine and Sylvester I. Moreover, the last paragraph of the book insists on Constantine's translocation to Constantinople so that Rome remained to the popes.[577] No allusion to the transfer of power from Constantine to his sons transpires in the text. Louis XIII would have been rather pleased to read about such a detail as Rubens' *Death of Constantine* indexed (fig. VI. 12, 20).[578] At the same time, Angeloni's last phrase of the book emphasizes the religious, Catholic, dimension, of the emperor's personality. Constantine's propagation of religion served Angeloni to outline an exemplum that clearly resonated with Urban VIII's activities through *De Propaganda Fide* (the *Propagation of the Faith*). The significant support given by Urban

[576] See Louis XIII's introductory letter in Angeloni as well. Angeloni deftly signed his dedication to Louis XIII on the feast day of emperor's patron saint St. Louis (to whom the Roman church of the French nation is dedicated).
[577] See above n. 575.
[578] As it was described in the *Death of Constantine* and prepared by the *Foundation of Constantinople*.

VIII to *De Propaganda Fide* is well known. [579]This organism helped the papacy construct power from within the sacred sphere when its efforts to intervene on the secular political arena seemed futile. As we have seen, Angeloni echoed Barberini politics with regard to both the foundation of Constantinople and contemporary papal initiatives. Evidently, his section on Constantine's acts of propagating faith was also meant to instill Christian rulers in the fight against "infidels." Angeloni honored Louis XIII as a new Constantine, but his pro-papacy stance allows speculation that Angeloni may have aspired to offer to the dedicatee not only a book but equally a reply to the policies on secular matters authorized by Constantine.

At this time, favorable statements about Constantine's abandonment of Rome to the popes could be inserted into writings related to a more recent field of historical inquiry, the study of history of the "Oriental Empire"—today called Byzantine. If Constantine's conversion advanced him as the crucial intersecting figure between paganism and Christianity, his transfer to Constantinople made him the originator of the "Oriental Empire." Catholic interest in the history of the Oriental monarchy had crystallized with the concern over the "Ottoman threat" and with the non-Catholic or nationalist Catholic leaders' interest in employing Constantinian imagery for epitomizing the Caesaropapsim theory.[580] The long disputes with the Patriarchy of Constantinople on the preeminence of Rome had gradually abated after the Ottoman defeat of Constantinople in 1453. Then, the "Oriental Empire" could safely be perceived as a prolongation of, and complement to, the empire originating in Rome and exploited in the

[579] See *Compendio di storia della Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o "de Propaganda Fide" 1622 – 1972,* Ecclesia Catholica Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide (Rome: Pont. Univ. Urbaniana, 1974), 1-47.
[580] See also my discussion in Chapter II.

anti-Christian fight. Late sixteenth-century Catholic compendia begin to give heed to eastern Christianity in parallel to Catholicism with the issue of the *translatio imper*ii illustrated in many such publications.[581] *La Monarchia d'Oriente* (1679) by the Venetian Augustinian maestro Giacomo Fiorelli devotes substantial lines to the benefits endowed by Constantine to St. Peter's successors when he left Rome for the city that he would build for himself.[582] The history of the "Oriental Empire" afforded the inclusion of both the prejudices and the political sympathy of those who sustained the Roman Catholic cause.

Dissertations on Constantinian deeds could implicitly reiterate the argument that the foundation of Constantinople was capable of substituting the Donation of Constantine. Encomia of Constantine's campaign of building Christian establishments in Rome, prior to his relocation to Constantinople, often touched upon the subject of the Constantinian donation, gifts, and transfer of power to the East for in order to disseminate the desired message. In *De Lateranensibus Parientinis,* Alemanni did not deal with any particular Constantinian monument per se, but because of the fact that the Triclinium belonged to the Lateran complex, allusions to its decoration, supported by Alemanni's authority on the subject, could be pertinently incorporated into descriptions of the Lateran. Notably, Cesare Rasponus, like Giovanni Severano (*Le Sette Chiese,* 1630), adopted Alemanni's interpretation and cited it abundantly, in his *De Basilica et*

[581] Yet, these endeavors seem rather inclusive approaches to the neglected material than combative against papal supremacy. The authorities on this topic are Onofrio Panvinio, *Cronologia Ecclesiastica, ovvero I Fasti* (Roma: 1556, 1592) and Cesare Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Roma: 1588-1607).

[582] "Rivverito Iddio , e I suoi santi con tanto ossequio, volle alla Pontifici autorità, che con tanto decoro risplendeva in Silvestro, accrescere la venerazione, no'solo con voti dell'Anima, ma co(n) cumulo straordinario di favori de la benefica mano. (Costantino) stabilì di lasciar libero il possesso di Roma…Liberalità veramente augusta, quale con stabilire un Trono imperturbabile a Vicarj di Christo, si vide su lo stesso a trionfare…Fù du(n)que l'Imperio di Roma, o per dir meglio del Mo(n)do trasportato a Bizantio." Giacomo Fiorelli, *La Monarchia d'Oriente* (Venetia: D. Milocco, 1679), 8-9.

Patriarchio Lateranensi (1656), dedicated to Alexander VII (1655-67)—a bold supporter of the Constantinian origins of the Church.[583] The dual *translatio imperii* still appealed to papal advocates. Excerpts from both Alemanni's and Rasponus's work on the Triclinium are to be found in an eighteenth-century collection on the Lateran published by the *Typography Pontifici Vaticani* (*Niccolai Alemanni, De Lateranensibus Parientinis. Dissertatio historica. Additis qua ad idem argumentum spectantia spriserunt,* 1756).[584]

Consensus on the interpretation of the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* was not possible, given that the interpretation had fundamentally distinctive meanings that varied according to the political beliefs. Proponents of secular power read the event exclusively as a transfer of the imperial seat. For papal advocates, the concept of *translatio imperii ad Occidentem* in 800 was seen to be a result of the earlier translatio engendered by Constantine in the fourth century—by which the papacy gained not only Rome, in perpetuity, but also temporal power—as a consequence of which the episode known as the foundation of Constantinople could become a proxy for the Donation of Constantine.[585]

The French Gifting of the Constantinian Tapestry Cycle to the Papacy and the Meaning of the and the Translatio Imperii *in Paris*

The French showed reluctance in complying with the political views of the papacy but simulated submission through the gifts proffered to the papal legation on the

[583] "Nicolaus Alemannus Vaticanea Bibliothecae Custos elegantem tratactus conscripsit cum erudite mysteriorum eiusdem picturae explicatione. … Etenim Leo Pontifex in iis tum suae redintegrationis; tùm translationis utriusque Imperii ab Occidente ad Orintem, rursusque ab Oriente ad Occidentem picturae benefitio seriem universam amplexus est." Cesare Rasponus, 340-1. For Alexander VII, see Chapter V.
[584] Giuseppe Simone Assemani, *Alemanni, De Lateranensibus*.
[585] Even today encyclopedia of saints may include a reference to Pope Sylvester I's duty to take over the leadership of Rome in the aftermath of Constantine's transfer to Constantinople. See *Il Grande Libro dei Santi. Dizionario Enciclopedico,* ed. Elio Guerriero, Tonino Tuniz, Claudio Leonardi, Andrea Riccardi, and Gabriella Zarri (Milan: San Paolo Edizioni, 1998), vol. III, 282.

verge of its departure. The papal legation, led by Francesco Barberini, failed to accomplish its delicate task of pacifying Spain and France.[586] This failure showed that the pope's peacemaking role, as derived from pro-papal exegeses of the Donation of Constantine, lacked universal recognition. Greatly frustrated, Urban VIII ordered the rejection of any gift from the French king. Though hesitant in accepting the tapestries, Francesco Barberini felt that he should not complicate a delicate political situation already detrimental to the papacy. Contrary to the wish of his uncle Urban VIII, Francesco Barberini consented to receiving the gift after being enticed by the king's councilors in the form of *Baptism of Constantine* tapestry. The highly performed advertisement of the royal gift by means of the *Baptism of Constantine* was intended to demonstrate royal deference to papal authority. In order to highlight the same message, Cardinal Richelieu, the major political protagonist at the French court, sent to Francesco Barberini a *Chinea*−a white horse. While horses were often part of a diplomatic gift, a *Chinea* also alluded to the symbolical annual tribute paid by the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to the papacy. The French challenged certain papal prerogatives but intended at the same time to enhance the influence of the French over the Spanish interests in Rome.

The pope's refusal to accept any gift even before the French presented their gift attests to the symbolic agreement value attributed to a diplomatic gift by the two protagonists in the negotiations. A gift may be perceived as an invasion of the donor into the self-definition of the donee, which creates a tension that is of most interest when studying the exchange of gifts between the French court and the Barberini. Marcel Mauss's landmark work *The Gift* has been the cornerstone of thriving multidisciplinary

[586] See above n. 496.

scholarship on the gift. Comparing different traditions from around the world, Mauss proposed generally valid gifting principles: the obligation to return the gift with another gift, individualization of the gift by the giver for the donee, and the inalienable imprint of "something of the donor" on the gift.[587] Scholars have challenged the level of generalization of Mauss's theory. For instance, Raymond Firth has shown that the essential specificities of gifting tend to defeat Mauss's conclusions about universal mechanisms of gift practices.[588] Taking issue with Mauss, Jacques Derrida contested the validity of a semantic unity that can lead to an accurate generalizations about gifting.[589] In addition, Derrida criticizes the idea of an inherent exchange dimension in gift offering. For Derrida, the gift must exclude the idea of a reciprocation in order to be considered gift, practically, one may say, a "*pure* gift".[590] Furthermore, in his view a gift should not be recognized as such either by the donor or by the donee because otherwise the symbolic nature of the gift—"the *intentional meaning* of the gift"[591]—emanates from its

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[587] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990). For a collection of different disciplinary approaches, see Aafke E. Komter, *The Gift: an Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996). For the Early Modern culture, see Natalie Zemon Davis' exploration of a "gift mode" as opposed to an abstract notion of gift (Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000)); Jane Fair Bestor's sociological study on marriage transactions in the Renaissance (see Jane Fair Bestor, "Marriage Transactions in Renaissance Italy and Mauss's Essay on the Gift," *Past & Present* 164, (Aug. 1999): 6-46); Alexander Nagel has explored the conception of art as gift that challenges the traditional principles of exchange, "Gifts for Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 4 (Dec. 1997): 647-668. Genevieve Warwick, in her study on Pietro Testa's collecting, proposed the adoption of an anthropological perspective on gifting in creating value for art (see Genevieve Warwick, *The Arts of Collecting: Padre Sebastiano Resta and the Market for Drawings in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)). Tim Shepard has recently studied Leo X's strategies of self-representation in a Medici music manuscript offered as a gift (see Tim Shepard, "Constructing Identities in a Music Manuscript: The Medici Codex as a gift," *Renaissance Quarterly* LXIII, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 84-127).

[588] Raymond Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), 368-402.

[589] Jacques Derrida, *Given Time. I, Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 1-70.

[590] I will keep "pure" italicized to make clear my intervention (one made only for reasons of comprehensibility).

[591] Derrida, *Given Time*, 14.

recognition and annuls the gift as (*pure*) gift. Urban VIII's refusal of gifts was meant to generate a diplomatic offence, and was not simply a failure to recognize a gift. In Early Modern diplomatic gift exchange in Europe, the concept of reciprocity was, in fact, of critical importance. Contemporaries were acquainted with classical thoughts on the obligation either to reciprocate gifts as recommended by Cicero (*De Officis*) or to extrapolate gifts from a system of exchange as Seneca inscribed (*De Beneficiis*).[592] A diplomatic gift—a reflection of the intricate relationship between etiquette and power—involved exchange as a basic principle of the diplomatic protocol. By employing the terminology of the diplomatic gift, the aim here is to emphasize the internal necessity of reciprocation embedded in it that automatically excludes its status as a "*pure* gift."

Despite Mauss's faults, emerging especially from his tendency to universalize the mechanism of human comportment with regard to gifting, his theses, which are extracted from the classical Roman tradition, may productively complicate one's interpretation of the Rubens-da Cortona *Life of Constantine* tapestry cycle. According to Mauss and subsequent scholars who have studied gift reciprocation, the obligation to return a gift does not necessarily mean reciprocity in the gift value. The response gift could supersede the material value of the received gift. In our case, the pope had obviously sent a diplomatic gift to the French king. In return, Louis XIII, along with his political advisors, chose the tapestry set so as to top or at least to equal the gift from the pope, both in Christian connotations and material value. To grasp wholly the endorsement of the *Life of Constantine* as a diplomatic gift by Louis XIII, it is helpful to look at the gifts presented

[592] On the popularity of Seneca's *De Beneficiis* in the sixteenth century, see Nagel, "Gifts for Michelangelo" 651.

by the papal legation.[593]

Not only did the Barberini offer to the French royalty diplomatic gifts characterized by material preciousness and piety, but they also paid attention to how the diplomatic gifts could echo unique papal features. Unfortunately, most of the gifts have not survived, though luckily, documentation on these gifts has been preserved. Scholars have considered a few of these gifts through the art of collecting prespectives, but the discussion of the gifts as part of the diplomatic mission of the Barberini and their relevance to motivating the French to respond with the gift of the Life of Constantine is presented here for the first time. Cassiano dal Pozzo's "Diary of the Legation," offers the most detailed information, although occasionally confusing, about the gifts prepared for the French royalty.[594] Perplexingly, Louis XIII seems to have received a relatively modest gift—paintings on silver representing the *Last Supper* and the *Nativity* that were made either as one double-faced panel or as two separate panels.[595] According to some scholars, the material insignificance of the gift presented to the king as compared to the gifts offered to the other members of the royal family is supposedly explainable by the

[593] The legation was prepared with many gifts, but we look here only at the most significant ones. Unfortunately, the gifts made out of metal—such as the ones for the king and his brother—did not survive the fury of melting occasioned by military campaigns.
[594] Barb. Lat. 5688, BAV.
[595] Cassiano's account is confusing because he mentions two distinct subjects represented on presumably a single silver panel. First, within the gift offering context, he recorded "un quadro di basso rilievo d.Argent.o nell quale era figurata la Cena di N.S."(Barb. Lat., 5688, fol. 221). Secondly, while describing the religious ceremonies prepared at Fontainebleau for the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, he pointed out the display of the panel gifted to the king: "Il Quadro che era sop.a l'Altare era quello che SS. Il.mo haveva donato à S. M.ta fatto di basso rilievo d'Arg.o con la nascita di N.S"(Barb. Lat., 5688, fol.246). On the one hand, Cassiano was familiar with the diplomatic gifts destined to the French royalty. On the other hand, as Cassiano helped Francesco Barberini to officiate the mass, it is hard to believe that he could misidentify the subject of the panel on the premise that he sat too far from it. All things considered, I see the possiblility of a double-faced panel as the most plausible one. Cassiano did not mention the name of the artist.

Barberini coming to the realization of the king's indifference to collecting.[596] On the other hand, one may think that the Barberini considered that the king was not the principal protagonist in the political scheme they wanted to implement and, thus, that a gift of exquisite silverwork representing the two culminant moments of the religious year — Christmas and Easter (the latter signified through the Eucharistic mystery)—was adequate for the king in this diplomatic context.[597] However, there is another possible interpretation that accords greater value to this gift and aligns it with the political interests of the papacy at this time. The paintings on silver given to Louis XIII reproduced two scenes linked with celebrated reliquaries in Rome: the famous silver reliquary container for the table used by Christ and the Apostles for the Last Supper that was preserved in the Lateran *Basilica Constantiniana* (fig. VI. 32) and the *Nativity* scene associated with the *Presepio* in the papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (fig. VI. 33).[598] The former was incorporated in the altar of the Holy Sacrament, above the ostensorium. Offering replicas of famous reliquaries or altarpieces in Rome as diplomatic gifts was an established practice and excellent resource for reminding rulers of their duties towards the papacy.[599]

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[596] For the French kings' indifference for collecting after Francois I and prior Louis XIV, see Antoine Schnapper, *Curieux de grand siècle: Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994). Without mentioning what gift the papal legation gave to the king, Anne le Pas de Sécheval states that the king received only a bagatelle in comparison with the other members of the royal family (Anne le Pas de Sécheval, "Louis XIII," in *Un temps d'exubérance. Les arts décoratifs sous Louis XIII et Anne d'Autriche*, ed. Daniel Alcouffe, Emmanuel Coquery, Gérard Mabile, and Marie-Laure de Rochebrune (Paris: Réunion des musée nationaux, 2002), 30-31.

[597] Richelieu was evidently the principal actor, but, interestingly, no record of the gift for Cardinal Richelieu is to be found in Cassiano's *Diario*.

[598] The rich silver reliquary hosting the Last Supper Table created in 1588-1589 by Curzio Vanni was melted for metal during the Napoleonic occupation (the present one is a late replica).

[599] Copies of important relics in the possession of the Lateran Basilica had been offered to Henry of Navarra by Clement VIII for emphasizing the bond between the Basilica Constantiniana and the French kings−proclaimed canons and defenders of the Lateran Church. In 1603, Henry IV of Navarra received a copy of the venerated Lateran icon of SS. Peter and Paul, the one believed to have been presented to Constantine immediately following the emperor's vision of the two apostles for identification purposes. (Avviso, Di Roma li 13 di 7bre 1603). The vision illuminated Constantine about the necessity to receive

The gift destined for Duke Gaston d'Orléans, Louis XIII's younger brother, alluded suggestively to the donee's active political function at the royal court as the commander of the French troops at that time. The Duke received a silver miniature replica of the column in front of the papal Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. Although the replica is no longer extant, one can imagine it by having a look at the original (fig. VI. 34). Erected in 1613-1614 by Carlo Maderno for Paul V (1605-1621) to praise Christian triumph, the column bore the official title of the Column of the Virgin because of the statue of the Immaculate Virgin that topped it. [600] Yet, the column had another popular name, the *Colonna della Pace* (the Column of Peace), due to the fact that Paul V had ordered Carlo Maderno to exploit the last extant column from what was identified in the period as the ancient Roman Temple of Peace. [601] The medal issued in

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baptism from Pope Sylvester in order to be cured of leprosy. Obviously, this episode paralleled Henry IV's conversion to Catholicism. During the papacy of Paul V (1605-1621) the statue of the French king Henry IV commissioned from Nicholas Cordier (1608) was inserted in the portico of the lateral entrance to the Lateran Basilica in a direct dialogue with the frescoes of Constantinian themes from the Benediction Loggia and the transept. Henry IV's biographer, J. B. Legrain *(Décade contenant la vie et les gestes d'Henri le Grand*, Paris, 1614), emphasized the significance of the Constantinian connection for the newly converted king. Later on, in 1659, Francesco Barberini strategized his own reconciliation with Philip IV through diplomatic gifts as well. The Cardinal endowed the king with a silver copy after Algardi's *The meeting between Leo the Great and Attila* altarpiece in St. Peter's by Ercole Ferrata (today in the Chapel of the Royal Palace in Madrid). On the bronze frame was the motto *Pax Christiana suviecit*. The theme of the Christian pax expressed by means of diplomatic gifts remained central to Francesco Barberini's politics. For Ercole Ferrata see Jennifer Montagu, "Un dono del Cardinale Francesco Barberini al Re di Spagna," in *Arte illustrata*, 43-44 (sett-ott 1971): 42-51; Jennifer Montagu, "Ercole Ferrata da Algardi, L'incontro di Atiila e Papa San Leone Magno," in *Algardi, L'altra faccia del barocco*, ed. Jennifer Montagu (Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1999), 176. For the reconciliation, see José Louis Colomer, "Arte per la reconciliazione: Francesco Barberini e la corte di Filippo IV," in *I Barberini e la cultura Europea del Seicento: atti del convegno internazionale Palazzo Barberini alle Quttro Fontane, 7-11 dicembre 2004*, ed. Lorenza Mochi Onori (Rome: De Luca Editori D' Arte, 2007), 95-110.

[600] For Paul V's project, see Steven F. Ostrow, "Paul V, the Column of the Virgin, and the New Pax Romana," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 3 (September 2010): 352-377.

[601] At the beginning of the fifteenth century, when Sodoma included the Basilica as backdrop for one of the scenes of the *Life of Alexander the Great* commissioned by Agostino Chigi for his villa in Rome (subsequently the Villa Farnesina), the Basilica still had two columns. The Temple of Peace is the today Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine. Its construction had begun in 306 by Maxentius and had been completed by Constantine after his victory over Maxentius. However, the building was indentified as such only in 1818. Even though Constantine had offered precedents through the construction of a few columns

conjunction with the erection of the *Colonna della Pace* bears the inscription FUNDA NOS IN PACE.[602] According to the inscriptions carved on its base, the column had commemorated the peace instituted in the aftermath of Vespanianus' triumph over the Jews. Such a gift resonated with the message the papacy endeavored to convey at the French court: peace. However, at the same time, the *Colonna della Pace* had associations with the Spanish fief at Santa Maria Maggiore.[603] Nonetheless, the *Colonna* was spatially aligned with the Constantinian obelisk of San Giovanni in Laterano, a church under the influence of the French and in whose portico adjacent to the lateral entrance the statue of Henry IV had stood since 1608.[604] There was an ongoing contest in Rome at this time between the French and the Spaniards over the physical space in the city through which they could exert political dominance at the papal court.[605] Aware of the competition between these two monarchical powers on the Roman stage, the papacy could allude to their most recent interest in concluding peace between France and Spain when presenting the Duke of Orléans with a replica of *Colonna della Pace*.

Gifting objects of religious content enhanced not only devotional practices but also awareness of institutional concerns. The *Rosa benedetta*, a traditional papal gift,

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in Constantinople, a direct connection between the *Colonna della Pace* and Constantine's victory *in signo crucis* in the seventeenth-century context seems impossible.

[602] Published in the 1630 edition of Alphonsius Ciaconius' *Vitae, et res gestae pontificum romanorum et S.R.E*. The marginal comment explains: *Columna ex vetusti Pacis Templi reliquis excisa in excuilis erecta*.

[603] The *Colonna della Pace* is topped by a statue of the Immaculate Virgin, a theme to whose cause the Spaniards were very attached and which created dissentions between the French and the Spaniards. Such a theme updated the French crown about current papal interests in religious matters.

[604] An idea subsequently replicated at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore with the insertion of the statue of the Spanish king Philip IV. See Steven F. Ostrow, "Gianlorenzo Bernini, Girolamo Lucenti, and the Statue of Philip IV in S. Maria Maggiore: Patronage and Politics in Seicento Rome," *Art Bulletin* 73, no. 1 (1991): 89-118.

[605] For instance, see Thomas Dandelet, "Setting the Noble Stage in Baroque Rome: Roman Palaces, Political Contest, and Social Theater, 1600-1700," in *Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome*, ed. Stefanie Walker and Frederick Hammond (Yale University Press, New York: 1999), 39-52.

destined for the king's little sister Henrietta Maria (the future queen of England), would have been intended to remind the donee about the Catholic tenets she needed to follow while living in Protestant England. [606] The major component of the gift presented to the Queen Mother Maria de Medici, in whom the Tuscan Barberini hoped to find a strong ally, was a small-size painting of *St. Francis receiving the Child from the Virgin* by the famous artist Domenichino described as a "Caracci pupil" in dal Pozzo's diary.[607] The theme of the painting represented a recent Counter-Reformation addition to the Franciscan legends. Through this gift the papacy intended to update the French crown on recent decisions regarding the cult of this saint and reiterate the authority of the Holy See to dictate in sacred matters, at a time when the discussion of the implementation of the Council of Trent decretals were still on-going in France.[608] In addition, it is well known that the Franciscans were promoters of the cult of the Holy Cross.[609] The array of gifts presented by the papal Legation invited the French to reflect upon a meaningful gift in return.

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[606] The Rose is a sacred gift blessed by the pope on the fourth Sunday of the Lent (or the Laetare Sunday) when the Rose is shown to the faithful. The first mentions of the *Rose d'oro* date from the pontificate of Leo IX and refer to *Rose* created during previous pontificates but uncertainty hovers over its "birthdate." Different balsams and musk—the sacred unguent, or chrism, of the possession rite—were applied on the *Rose*. The earliest treatise dedicated to this topic is Carlo Cartari's *La Rosa d'oro pontificia. Racconto istorici consagrato alla Santità di N.S. Innocenzo XI Pontefice Massimo da Carlo Cartari orvietano* (Roma: Stamperia della Rev. Camera Apostolica, 1681. For the *Rose* d'oro produced at the Roman Court in this period see Alvar González-Palacios, *Arredi e ornamenti alla corte di Roma, 1560-1795* (Milan: Montadori Electa, 2004), 36-41. For the religious significance of the *Rose d'oro*, see Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di eudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, 1840-1861, LXII, p. 111.

[607] This painting is preserved in the Louvre. Francesco Barberini may have chosen devotional gifts alluding to his patron-saint as a form of self-representation. Maria de Medici also received "un crocifisso del Legno di S. Fran.co con sua Croce e Monte d'ebano" (Barb. Lat. fol. 225). The Barberini expressed overtly their sensitivity in choosing Domechino for emphasizing the Medici affiliation with the French crown. Domenichino had painted the venerated *Stories of St. Cecilia* in the Roman church of the French nation, a church built thanks to the generosity of the Medici.

[608] The theme was to become popular in the period. In 1629, Domenechino himself was commissioned to paint it again in the Merenda Chapel in the Roman Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria.

[609] Several Franciscan churches are dedicated to the Holy Cross and host depictions of its legend.

The sign of the Cross ubiquitously animated official encounters between the papal Legation and the French counterpart. Appropriately for the nature of the legation, the French welcomed Francesco Barberini during his entry into Paris with the gift of a cross-reliquary containing fragments of the Holy Cross.[610] In turn, the legate Barberini, whose mission was formally called the "legazione della Croce," presented himself invariably holding a cross "similar to the pope's."[611] The Cardinal insisted on including the portable cross among his accoutrements even during less official meetings, and likely accompanied it with rhetorical allusions to the significance of the Cross and its usage by secular rulers beginning with Constantine. The visualization of the Cross, as well as verbal references to it, would have stimulated the French to prepare a response "in signo crucis."

In addition to the diplomatic gifts presented by the papal envoys and the legate's mobilization of the symbol of the Cross, another contemporary incident may have incited the French to reciprocate with the gift of the tapestry cycle representing the *Life of Constantine*. In 1625, a year that Francesco Barberini spent mostly in France, news about the publication of Nicolò Alemanni's book on the restoration of the Lateran Triclinium reached Paris. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Alemanni's book provoked a debate at the French court. [612] Francesco Barberini, when asked by Nicholas-Claude de Peiresc about his involvement in the Triclinium project, dissimulated with regard to his

[610] "Entratti dal d.o Borgo nella Città s'andò di luogo al luogo ….e portatoli abbaciar la Croce nella qual disse esservi del pretiossis.mo Legno della S.ta Croce," Barb. Lat. 5866, Fol. 108v.
[611] On the verge of Cardinal's departure from Rome: "a luogo solito degl'altri Concistori q.ul fù semipub.o, segui in fin d'esso il dar la Croce al Card. Sud.o q.al fù in q.ta maniera…ingioninchaindoli, e mettendoli alcune volte le mani in Capo dandoli in fine la Croce simile à q.ella che si porta inanzi il Papa" (Barb. Lat. 5866, fol. 1v-2). In France: "col solito Corteggio e Croce inanzi, andò à Palazzo all'udienza di S.M quale fu brevissima" (Ibid., fol. 150); "Desinato che ebbe con col sol.o Corteggio e Croce inanzi andò a Palazzo per dare il buon viaggio e visitar la Reg, a d'Ing.ra." (Ibid., fol.152); etc.
[612] See Herklotz, "Francesco Barberini,"187-193. And, above p. 297-298.

endorsement of Alemanni's book by simply stating that the book would not have been published had he been in Rome at the time.[613] Considering that the Constantinian image on the Triclinium was designed to buttress the papal doctrine of the *translatio imperii*, the hypothesis that the French gift of the *Life of Constantine* was intended to demonstrate to the pope how the theory on the transfer of imperial power was understood in Paris deserves attention.

A gift bears the inalienable stamp of a donor, Louis XIII's effort to attune his diplomatic gift to the donee's particular interests charged the gift with additional significance. The *Life of Constantine* responded to the papacy's concerns regarding how the Constantinian period was understood. However, the performance of revealing the gift, an undertheorized aspect in modern scholarship, emerged as equally important for its efficaciousness. The manner of presenting the *Life of Constantine* to Cardinal Barberini was shrewd. The unveiling of the *Baptism* scene, intended to represent metonymically the full cycle, guaranteed its acceptance. The message transmitted by the *Baptism* resonated with papal views on the disputed subject of the Constantinian legacy. The inclusion in the cycle of the *Foundation of Constantinople* and the *Death of Constantine,* however, subtly signaled an alternative interpretation that supported the preeminence of secular rulers in the wielding of temporal power.

The circumstances of this gift exchange conferred upon it an aura of uniqueness: a tapestry cycle representing the life of a donor to the Church par excellence, Constantine, offered to the pope. At a glance, one notices that the gift of the French king expressed a

[613] It seems that Francesco Barberni was a keen practitioner of dissimulation-simulation. In a letter dated 1654, the Duke of Terranova wrote to Philip IV that Cardinal Barberini "en sus conveniencias hay la mas oculta simulaçion que ha visto el mundo." Quoted in Colomer, "Arte per la reconciliazione,"108, n.49.

negation because although the Constantine tapestry set presents the emperor's submission to the pope through the *Baptism*, it lacks a representation of Constantinian gifting that could refer even obliquely to the *Donation of Constantine.* [614] Obviously, the gift of the French king neither enlarged the papal territories nor enhanced the pope's power. The diplomatic gift recalled not Constantine's donation (*donatio/donazione*) but his gifts (*dota*) towards the Church.[615] But the pope did not care for a diplomatic gift. Upon examination, it becomes clear that the gift emphasized the French discontent with current papal politics.

The Tapestry Set Gifted by the French

The intricate story of the commission of the tapestry set gifted to the Barberini cannot be resolved entirely due to lack of irrefutable evidence. For the present argument, the most important aspect of its production emerges from its intended function as a diplomatic gift given by the entourage of Louis XIII. [616] The royal attributes attached to this particular tapestry set attest to the fact that the king played the part of its endorser. It is known that Rubens received the commission for a series of sketches and cartoons of a

[614] Such as Giovanni Baglione's in the Lateran Basilica. For Baglione, see Chapter IV.
[615] For the contemporary distinction between *donatio/donazione* and *dota*, see Chapter III, IV.
[616] What was the set initially commissioned for? David Dubon hypothesized that the *Life of Constantine* may have been ordered directly or indirectly by the Saint-Marcel shop. Dubon, *Tapestries*, 5. Julius S. Held speculated that the *Life of Constantine*, as well as some other sets, may have been a conjoint business adventure between Rubens and a tapestry manufactory —Saint-Marcel shop in this case—seeking a certain buyer-patron. Julius S. Held, "On the Date and Function of Some Allegorical Sketches by Rubens," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 38 (1975), 226. These speculations have been refuted by Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 113. Isabelle Denis has identified a document from 1625 that confers monopoly privileges over Rubens' cartoons on the Saint-Marcel shop for another eighteen years (Isabelle Denis, "The Parisian Workshops, 1590-1650," in *Tapestry in the Baroque Threads of Splendor*, ed. by Thomas Campbell, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art ; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 212). As mentioned earlier, Koenraad Brosens has attributed the entire responsibility for the launching of the project to the owners of Saint-Marcel workshop (Brosens, *Rubens*, 1-50). The apposite conclusion is that although the king may not have been involved in the project from the very beginning, he became interested in it at some moment.

Life of Constantine, most probably in 1622 when he was visiting Paris in connection with his paintings for the *Maria de Medici* and *Henry IV* galleries in the Parisian Luxembourg Palace.[617] Rubens provided the cartoons for the *Life of Constantine,* designed by his "servitori" after his oil sketches, between the last months of 1622 and 1623, directly to the Saint-Marcel shop where they could be marketed through public display on certain occasions.[618] Whether or not the king was actively involved with the project from the beginning, his wish to have another set woven for him, corroborated with evidence of the king's general lack of interest in collecting, certifies that he appreciated the religio-political importance of Rubens' *Life of Constantine*.[619]

Archival evidence cannot satisfactorily elucidate how the Saint-Marcel shop operated with regard to the order in which the pieces of a series were produced. It is therefore not possible to know why these particular seven episodes of the intended full cycle came out first. However, one cannot overlook the fact that the abbreviated *Life of Constantine* presented to Francesco Barberini functioned as a series per se. Taking into account that the Cardinal was in Paris and Fontainebleau for only six months, the criteria for selecting the seven tapestries of the gift may have been constrained by the necessity to create an effective short cycle mostly in relation to either completed pieces or pieces in-

[617] Dubon, *Tapestries,* 3-7. In the end, the gallery dedicated to Henry IV was never projected.
[618] See the letter of Peiresc to Rubens dated Dec. 1, 1622 (partially reproduced in Brosens, *Rubens*, 360-1). The first four cartoons that reached Paris were the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, the *Land Campaign against Licinius* (not woven for the Barberini) the *Baptism of Constantine*, and the *Apparition of the Monogram of Christ* (not woven for the Barberini). See Peirsec's letter to Rubens reproduced in Dubon, *Tapestries*, 6-8. Brosens, *Rubens* 360-2.
[619] While it is clear that the set for the king was woven in the 1620's, it is difficult to conclude that this set was woven before the one for the Barberini, or at the same time, or whether some pieces of this set for the king were combined with those gifted to the Barberini. The "royal set" had remained in the royal collection until 1798-1799. It was sold during the French Revolution and disappeared soon afterwards (Fenaille, *Etat general des tapisseries*, vol.I, 249). A *Foundation of Constantinople* belonged to this set as well.

progress or only rarely to as yet unwoven ones.[620] The sequence was formed by major events in Constantine's life and chronologically bracketed by the emperor's marriage and death: the *Double Marriage of Constantine and Licinius*, the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, the *Entry into Rome*, the *Baptism of Constantine*, *The Veneration of the Holy Cross*, the *Foundation of Constantinople*, and the *Death of Constantine* (fig. VI. 1-10).

A comparison of Rubens' *modelli* with the tapestries demonstrates that there were pointed modifications made that tailored the tapestry cycle representing the *Life of Constantine* more specifically to the message that the French king wished to communicate with this diplomatic gift. Imperial, or respectively royal, attributes are dramatized in the tapestries to a much greater extent than in the modelli.[621] First of all, Rubens' *modelli* lack any border whereas the tapestries have an elaborate border on which the emblems of the French royalty and of Navarra accompany Constantine's imperial eagle and monogram. While the eagle signified imperial identity in general, the monogram had been attached to the martial banner (the *labarum*) by Constantine. In the *Foundation of Constantinople* tapestry (figs. VI. 11, 19), the size of the eagle hovering above Constantine's head increased substantially in comparison with the *modello*.[622] The

[620] The *Vision of the Cross*, although provided by Rubens, is conspicuously absent but possible to make up for because the miraculous event was embedded in that depicting its immediate consequence, the victorious *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (fig. VI. 2, 4). As already mentioned in the previous chapters (Chapter I, II), Constantine had a vision of the cross right before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. When in possession of the short tapestry cycle, Francesco Barberini asked from da Cortona a *Vision of the Cross* (fig. VI. 17) to replace Rubens' related *Apparition of the Monogram* (fig. VI. 11). See below, p. 342.

[621] None of the cartoons has survived. Subsequent modifications in design could have been made in Paris.

[622] Why was that building plan selected for the tapestry in order to inhabit the spot left blank by Rubens in the modello? The circular plan was identified with that of the Pantheon's as drawn in Palladio's *Quattro libri d'architettura*. The Pantheon, functioning as the church of Santa Maria della Rotonda since the seventh century, pertained to the group of a few intactly preserved buildings of ancient Rome. In the *Foundation of Constantinople* tapestry, Constantine points towards a similar round structure within the precincts of Constantinople. The building represented Constantine's most notable undertaking in the city, the circular church of SS. Apostles known to us from literary sources. The plan of the Pantheon equipped

imperial and papal paraphernalia in the *Baptism of Constantine*—the pope's triple tiara, the emperor's crown—were added only at the cartoon phase as if to ensure orthodoxy with regard to the event. Conversely, the *Death of Constantine modello* and tapestry (figs. VI. 12, 20) versions display minor changes. Rubens' portrayal of the segregation of powers correspond with Louis XIII's views with regard to these scenes, so that no modification was required when adapting them for the king. This process of customization led to visualizing the perennial identity marks of Louis XIII.

The predominantly imperial approach adopted by Rubens for describing the *Life of Constantine* may have appealed to the king. The transfer of imperial power, the battle scenes, the trophies, the triumph, and the foundation of Constantinople eulogize the heroic nature of the imperial acts. Episodes like the *Labarum* or the *Vision of the Monogram* had an intrinsic religious dimension but they showed Constantine's communication with God directly, not mediated by the Church. The narrative of Constantine's life proposed by Rubens intersects very little with legends, with that of St. Sylvester (*Acta Sylvestri*) by depicting the *Baptism of Constantine* and with the legend of the Holy Cross by depicting the *Veneration of the Holy Cross*. However, both episodes had been treated starting with the earliest classical source: Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339). As we have seen in Chapter II, the Baptism was momentous for the papacy. In this narrative, it is the sole scene which represents the impact of the institution of the Church on the emperor's life.[623] The inclusion of the two episodes with legendary roots did not

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contemporaries with a convenient method of comparing visually so one could imagine Constantine's extinct church of SS. Apostles. The construction not only of a church consecrated to all twelve apostles but also of a mausoleum for Constantine within the church must have appealed to Louis XIII.

[623] On the other hand, the *Veneration of the Holy Cross* was a very familiar episode to Rubens who had painted an altarpiece of *St. Helena* for the Roman church of Santa Croce during his first stay in Rome. See

affect the new interpretation that Louis XIII, as a secular reader, desired to give the cycle.

The correspondence between Peiresc, the French antiquarian and Rubens indicates that Rubens himself designed the program for the cycle. [624] Recent scholarship has proposed that Rubens turned to Cesare Baronius' recent *Annales Ecclesiastici* rather than to Eussebius' classical account (*Vita Constantini*) for inspiration. This hypothesis is supported by documentary evidence recording that Rubens purchased a copy of the *Annales* in 1620.[625] In spite of Rubens' acquaintance with Baronius' work and of the fact that the subject matter they dealt with coincided, their goals differed.[626] Baronius approached Constantine from the perspective of ecclesiastical history, whereas Rubens proposed a heroic narrative coordinated in relation to imperial dictates (by which he tried to engage the king in the enterprise). While Rubens' familiarity with Baronius' work seems extremely plausible, Baronius may not be the exclusive source for Rubens' narrative.[627] As pointed out in Chapter II, there were manifold accounts of Constantine, written in a variety of genres, produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed, Baronius enjoyed authoritative status in the field of ecclesiastical history.

Hans Vlieghe, et al., *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*. *Part 8, Saints*. (London, New York: Phaidon, 1972-1973).

[624] In his letter to Rubens, Peirsec testifies that the king's inspectors of public works had only a vague idea about the life of Constantine and he was able to clarify details for them according to Rubens' exact description of the episodes sent to Peirsec himself: "…poiche V.S. m'haveva scritto il particolare delli soggietti, che se ben gli altri sapevano in generale che erano della Vita di Costantino, nulladimeno sapevano il particolare di ciascheduna historia che io gli l'andai esponendo .." (quoted in Dubon, *Tapestries*, 7). Bertrand believes that Peiresc has to be credited with the invention of the cycle (Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 50).

[625] Held, *The Oil Sketches*, 70; Fumaroli, "Cross, Crown, and Tiara," 89-91. Fumaroli, who interprets Rubens' cycle "in the name of the cross," adds Justus Lipsius' *De Cruce* (Antwerp, 1594). McGrath, *Subjects from History*, 65. See also David Jaffé, "The Barberini Circle. Some Exchanges between Peiresc, Rubens, and their Contemporaries," *Journal of the History of Collections* I, no. 2 (1989): 266. Early scholarship considered Eusebius' account as the only source used by Rubens (see Phyllis Ackerman, "Rubens' Constantine Tapestries," *International Studio* LXXIX (1924): 195-200). Rubens purchased the fourteen-volume collection published by the Plantin Press in Antwerp between 1597 and 1617.

[626] If he needed Baronius only for Constantine, he could have bought only the third volume.

[627] Peter Krüger has formulated a similar doubt. Krüger, *Studien zu Rubens*, 140.

However, if we examine Baronius' text, we can easily notice that in his treatment of all the major Constantinian events that were portrayed by Rubens—with the exception of the *Baptism*[628]—Baronius based his account either exclusively on Eusebius or on Eusebius in conjunction with other sources. Proneness to, and validity of, a more pronounced either ecclesiastical or secular take on Constantine's life was fuelled by the fact that the emperor's life represents an intersection between Roman pagan and Christian world.

The *Foundation of Constantinople* and the *Death of Constantine* were new additions to the corpus of Constantinian imagery whose potential to convey certain political messages made them the key pieces of the tapestry set. Regardless of the various chronologies advocated for arranging the tapestries, the last two episodes of the sequence must be the *Foundation of Constantinople* and the *Death of Constantine*. [629] The latter, even though succinctly treated in contemporary texts, terminated the chronicle of Constantine's deeds. For champions of the secular cause, as previously noted, the *Death of Constantine* illustrates unequivocally the transfer of territorial power, including that of Rome, from Constantine to his sons. However, the foundation of the New Rome, as we saw, gained increasing importance in crucial contemporary debates on the endowment of the Church by Constantine. In his research, Rubens could have found only minimal details on Constantinople in Eusebius, but much more in Baronius. In addition, Baronius could also have provided Rubens with a taste of the ongoing debate on the subject. Nevertheless, Rubens could have been cognizant of the debate that involved the foundation of Constantinople through other sources, given that the subject was discussed

[628] According to Eusebius, the baptism of Constantine took place at Nicomedia.
[629] Dubon and Zurawski propose different versions. Dubon, *Tapestries*, 37-38. Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens*, 142.

not only in the textual medium but also in societal conversations.[630] As already demonstrated, in the secular milieu, the foundation of Constantinople—the *translatio ad Orientem*— meant the transfer of the imperial seat due to administrative necessities, while temporal power remained with the emperor. In Constantinople, therefore, Constantine ruled over the ecclesiastical representatives (the "Caesaropapist" perspective described earlier). The clarity of the meaning of the *Death of Constantine* could permit the projection of the Caesaropapist reading on the *Foundation of Constantinople*. The last two pieces of the tapestry set interdependently expressed the political views retained at the French court. The selection of the gift may have been determined by the need to provide a response to the most recent formulation on the *translatio imperii* in Rome—the restoration of the Lateran Triclinium and the accompanying book by Alemanni. Such a retort was conspicuously meant to uproot any idea about the papacy's rights over the French king on the basis of the *translatio imperii ad Occidentem* through the Frankish Charlemagne as a result of the *translatio ad Orientem* willed by Constantine.

At the same time, the veneration directed towards Constantine and the celebration of his heroic acts within Catholic religious culture may have been exploited by Rubens in an innovative way. Rubens may have been encouraging viewers to rethink Constantine's attitude with respect to artistic production. The *Foundation of Constantinople* could have served such a purpose. Notably, Rubens excluded a representation of *Constantine Destroying the Idols*, an image intensely advocated in the Catholic milieu since the sixteenth century owing to its message attacking heresy. Nevertheless, the message also

[630] See above p. 296-324.

implied that Constantine had initiated a systematic campaign against ancient art.[631] In direct opposition to *Constantine Destroying the Idols* (fig. VI. 25), the *Foundation of Constantinople* promotes the first Christian emperor in a very favorable light with regard to his augmentation of ancient culture albeit of a Christian nature. Constantine appears as a patron of architecture. While humanists negatively interpreted Constantine's Christianizing campaign against ancient pagan art, architecture produced during Constantine's reign was considered not at all negligible.[632] Raphael's *Letter to Leo X* (1510's) states that while sculpture was pauperized under Constantine, architecture—exemplified by the *Arch of Constantine*—continued to be valuable.[633] Such a belief survived into the seventeenth century. In addition, Baronius portrayed Constantine as a great commissioner of sacred art, especially architecture.[634] By emphasizing Constantine's *forte*, architecture, Rubens explored not the emperor's decimation of ancient art, but his contribution to its flourishing. To a Christian ruler who retained Constantine as an exemplum, Constantine's refined architectural patronage may have seemed highly motivating.

The parallel between Louis XIII, "the most Christian King," and Constantine, the first Christian emperor shows how the diplomatic gift could be maximized in promoting the indelible imprint of the donor.[635] Two major facets of the Constantinian repertoire proved momentous for Louis XIII. First, Constantine as a founder and defender of the Christian empire fuelled the fashioning of Louis XIII as the most "Christian Prince," a

[631] For this issue, see Chapter I, II.
[632] For my detailed discussion of the early modern art literature on this topic see Chapter II.
[633] Raphael, "Lettera a Leo X," 459-484.
[634] Baronius, *Annales*, III, 332a-343e.
[635] I do not suggest a literary identification as some iconographic studies do.

clear manifestation of the extreme Catholic politics initiated by Cardinal Richelieu in opposition to the threat of the Spanish hegemony. Not arbitrarily, the king commissioned a series of the *Life of Constantine* for himself. The religious appearance of the French King dissimulatively concealed a pragmatic expansionist campaign, for which clemency—a Constantinian virtue[636]—could be invoked to make peace with the Huguenots, and thus keep territories under the control of the French crown.[637] Secondly, as stated in the second chapter, Constantinian imagery and legends were being exploited by contemporary European leaders to illustrate a political ideology that would subordinate sacred to secular power ("Caesaropapism"). Louis XIII coveted independence from the pope and the preeminence of the French interests at the papal court. Yet, not only emulation of Constantine urged Louis XIII to present the pope with the *Life of Constantine* but also the exigency of reminding the papacy that it could not impose consensus upon the meaning of the *translatio imperii* as the papacy promoted by means of the dual-faceted project of the Lateran Triclinium.

The Barberini Appropriation of the Gift and the Translatio Imperii *in Rome*

The *Foundation of Constantinople* could be interpreted in different ways by its viewers. For advocates of secular sovereignty, like the French diplomats, the *Foundation of Constantinople* would have meant a transfer of the locus of sovereign power, not of power itself. The association of this scene with the *Death of Constantine* allowed for such

[636] Clemency was principally attributed to Constantine due to his decision to cancel the killing of the innocent infants in whose blood he would have had to bath in order to be cured of leprosy according to pagan auspices and due to his tolerance with regard to different religions (promulgated through the Edict of Milan in 313).
[637] For Richelieu and dissimulation, see Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture*, 141-154.

an interpretation. However, the latter episode (*Death of Constantine*) would not have disturbed supporters of the Roman Church because, according to their judgment, the relocation of Constantine to the East, expressed through the *Foundation of Constantinople,* terminated the imperial occupancy of Rome and initiated the papal dominion over Rome. The transfer of imperial power, as depicted in the *Death of Constantine,* became an Oriental affair that had little relevance for the fate of the West. However, the well-versed Barberini would have been able to sense the "mocking" facet of the diplomatic gift. In the face of such a confrontation, Urban VIII and his nephew Francesco Barberini could not remain neutral. The Foundation of Constantinople, an undeniable historical truth, had to convey the message of Constantine's intention to cede Rome to St. Peter's successors, an act of deference that justified the empowerment of the papacy to execute a *translatio imperii* as illustrated in the mosaic of the Lateran Tricliniuim.

While there are no known representations of the *Donation of Constantine* from the Barberini pontificate, this papacy did commission works of art exhibiting Constantinian imagery and royal donations.[638] Urban VIII's high appraisal of Baronius' opinions illuminates the absence of the *Donation of Constantine* both from the expanded *Life of Constantine* tapestry set and from the monumental fresco cycle dedicated to

[638] The Barberini also advocated intensively the cause of St. Helena, Constantine's mother. Her life became an excellent vehicle to present Constantine. In the *Life of Constantine* tapestry set, St. Helena appears in the *Veneration of the True Cross* and her sarcophagus is the subject of one of the over-door panels. For St. Helena, see Chapter II. Sebastian Schütze refers to painted copies after the frescoes in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican made for the Barberini to be displayed in the Palazzo Barberini (see Sebastian Schütze, "Urbano VIII e il concetto di Palazzo Barberini. Alla ricerca di un primato culturale di rinascimentale memoria," in *Pietro da Cortona: atti del convegno internazionale, Roma-Firenze, 12-15 novembre 1997*, ed. Christophor L. Frommel and Sebastian Schütze (Milan: Electa, 1997), 86-97). My research could not reach such a conclusion. Therefore, it is impossible to affirm that a copy after the *Donation of Constantine* was made or or not.

Constantine in the Lateran-Constantinian Baptistery begun in 1636.[639] Had the Barberini been skeptical about commissioning a *Donation of Constantine*, they could have very well identified their agenda with the renovation—which basically meant the recreation—of the Constantinian image on the Lateran Triclinium (fig. VI. 30). In addition, the Barberini commitment to enlivening the memory of Countess Matilda (1046-1115) was motivated by promoting her donation that was regarded as incontestable in the period. This renewed interest in Matilda was epitomized by her Sala within the Vatican papal apartments, where her own *Donation* occupies a preeminent place (fig. VI. 40), and by the papal pretensions to the Dukedom of Urbino, formulated on the basis of her Donation.[640] The anxious preoccupation of Urban VIII with preserving and gaining back the domain obtained by the Church over the centuries by means of a series of documented donations motivated him to found the *Congregazione dei Confini*

[639] The concern with archeological accuracy may have led to even greater skepticism with regard to the Constantinian legend because the *Baptism of Constantine* is not represented in the fresco cycle. As clarified in the first chapter, the baptism of Constantine by Pope Sylvester in the Lateran Baptistery had been severely contested as well on the basis of Eusebius of Caesarea's contemporary testimony of emperor's baptism in Nicomedia instead. The fresco cycle was commissioned from Andrea Sacchi in 1636 and finished only in 1649 well into Innocent X's papacy (1644-1655). However, in the Lateran Baptistery, the *Baptism of Constantine* was commissioned by Urban VIII as a sculptural group on top of the baptismal font cover (See Rolf Quednau, "Costantino il Grande a Roma," 316-319). Thus, the baptismal font, along with the sculptural group of Constantine and St. Sylvester, comports as a substitute for the *Baptism of Constantine* in the fresco cycle because it intrudes visually into the narrative exactly at the moment of the transition from the pagan to the Christian emperor like the *Baptism* was supposed to do. The *Triumphal Entry into Rome* appears to the right of the baptismal font, whereas, to its left, the *Destruction of Idols* resumes the story.

[640] Evidently, the concern with verifiable historical truth during the Barberini reign motivated the papacy to promote the Donation of Countess Matilda. The decision to translate her human remains from the Abbey of San Benedetto Po (Mantua region) to St. Peter's in Rome shows the degree of Urban VIII's investment in advocating the cause of Countess Matilda. For the employment of imagery of Countess Matilda for the creation of genealogies of donations see Chapter V. For the transfer (see Marder, *Scala Regia*, 186); For general information on the Sala di Countess Matilda see Hess, Jacob, "Die Fresken der Sala della Contessa Mathilde im Vatican," *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien zu Renaissance und Barock* (1967) Band 1: 105-109, 395, Band 2 figs.: 43-48; Carlo Pietrangeli, ed., *Il Palazzo apostolico Vaticano* (Florence: Nardini Editrice, 1992), 277-282. The episode was inserted in the *Life of Urban VIII* tapestries woven in the Barberini workshop after the death of the Pope. The image shows Urban VIII receiving directly from Countess Matilda the map with the states included in her donation.

(Congregation for the Borders) in 1626.[641] These efforts attest to the Barberini partaking in the phenomenon of claiming power through historical acts of donation—even though the Donation of Constantine had not been referenced directly.

Officially repudiating the Donation, the Barberini entourage endeavored to validate the source of papal power through the two already mentioned strategies, by invoking either the medieval theory of divine extraction or by means of proxies for the discredited Constantinian Donation. The apparent tension between the two methods dissipated under the umbrella of the divine as the common dominator between the two. The theory of papal authority as an extension of divine authority, even in temporal matters excluded totally the invocation of the Donation of Constantine. There was no need of such a document because the authority granted by God to popes surpassed any terrestrial jurisdiction. Baronius' adoption of this position has been already discussed.[642] The papacy of Urban VIII began with a similar policy as the panegyrist Agostino Mascardi tried to convey in his record of Urban VIII's *possesso*, *Le pompe di Campidoglio (*1623). Mascardi attempted even harder to marginalize the issue of temporal power by claiming that spiritual authority indirectly monopolized temporal power.[643] Thus, the theological approach determined the issue closed within itself and

[641] Urban VIII nominated Bernardino Spada as Prefect of the Congregazione dei Confini, and Felice Contelori as its Secretary (I deal more extensively with these issues in Tita, "The Sword and the Bees."). After the death of Urban VIII, Contelori published a book on the life and donation of Countess Matilda.
[642] Baronius, *Annales*, III, 244e-245a.
[643] "Perche il Romano Pontefice, che da Dio hebbe immediatamente l'autorità spirituale, per mezzo di lei, indirettamente hebbe anche la temporale, in grado sovrano." Agostino Mascardi, *Le pompe di Campidoglio per la S.ta di N.S. Urbano VIII quando piglió il posseso descritte da Agostino Mascadi* (Roma: Apresso l'herede di Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1624), 62. The pope liked the eulogy and conferred upon Mascardi the title of "Cameriere d'onore." See Eraldo Bellini, *Mascardi Agostino*, DBI, 71 (2008), 525-532.

suspended the controversy.[644] On the other hand, the effort to publicize the *translatio imperii* through the dual-faceted project of the Lateran Triclinium from the early papacy of Urban VIII demonstrates that the Barberini were motivated to preserve the Constantinian roots of the papacy as once established with the foundation of Constantinople and the transfer to it. Unofficially, the Donation lingered on in the mentality of papal advocates. In 1644, a few months after the death of Urban VIII, the Venetian ambassador to the Roman court offered an acid characterization of Urban VIII's close advisor Felice Contelori, the custodian of the Vatican library after Alemanni's death and the Secretary of the *Congregazioni dei Confini.* The ambassador ridiculed Conteloni as a man who persuaded the pope that, according to his exhaustively revisionary work in the Vatican Archives, the Holy See owned all of Italy, or even more, the entire world.[645] The Barberini could afford to accept a *Life of Constantine* that did not correspond to their views in every respect.

While to possess exquisite tapestries designed by a famous artist like Rubens added prestige to one's collection, and suggests an additional potent reason for the acceptance of the gift by Cardinal Barberini against the pope's will, the option to complement the *Life of Constantine* cycle not with Rubens' remaining pieces but with new panels by Pietro da Cortona instead, placed a Barberini signature upon it. Francesco Barberini solicited Rubens on other occasions but the objective to control the narrative

[644] However, as one may expect, the criticism continued to be formulated but it was addressed to divine matters this time. As discussed in Chapter III, the issue of Constantinian imagery had been similarly treated by Gabrielle Paleotti (1582) who demanded the elimination of erroneous images depicting Constantine endowing the Roman Church by circumscribing them to the exclusive authority of the Holy See Gabrielle Paleotti, "Discorso," 277.

[645] "[Contelori]… di tanto credito appresso il papa..li fa credere che per la revisione da lui fatta di tutte le scritture, la Sede apostolica sia patrona di tutta Italia, per non dire di tutto il mondo." *Le relazioni della corte di Roma lette al Senato dagli ambasciatori veneri nel secolo decimosettimo*, ed. Gugliemo Berchet, I, (Venice, 1877), 400.

and the tapestry production motivated him to employ Pietro da Cortona.[646] The tapestries based on da Cortona's design were woven at irregular intervals throughout the 1630's: the *Vision of the Cross* (1633; fig. VI. 22), *Constantine Burning the Memorials* (1634; fig. VI. 24), the *Sea Battle* (1635; fig. VI. 23) the *Statue of Constantine* (1636; fig. VI. 26), *Constantine Destroying the Idols* (1638; fig. VI. 25) and *Constantine Fighting the Lion* (1637; fig. VI. 21). Artistically, the completion of the set by da Cortona involved an overt *paragone* between the Italian artist and Rubens, staged at the Barberini court.[647]

The question regarding Franceso Barberini's decision to change artists has been answered in different ways. Three motives have been propounded so far: political, financial, and aesthetic. A political motivation is seen in a connection with Rubens' ambassadorial mission to England pledging for the Anglo-Spanish peace.[648] A financial explanation notes that the cardinal opted to buy two mythological tapestry sets of smaller dimensions for the same price he would have had to pay for the remaining Rubens.[649] Finally, an aesthetic reason, proposes that Francesco Barberini wanted a unique product.[650] In any case, Francesco Barberini envisioned owning the tapestry set not only physically, but also as a means to relate a particular story. By changing its narrative through Pietro da Cortona's new panels and producing the tapestries in his own shop recently founded in 1627, the cardinal-nephew clearly emulated the European

[646] For other Barberni commissions from Rubens, see Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens,* 30-99.
[647] No other scenes than the *Battles* (fig. VI. 15, 23) invite more to a comparative view. In the early modern period, the battle scene was highly regarded among history painting especially because of its predilection for showing pathos. Giulio Romano's the *Battle of Milvian Bridge* in the Vatican *Sala di Costantino*, against which Rubens's composition could easily be compared, arrested much attention from Vasari, Giulio Mancini, Giovanni Pietro Bellori, and Nicolas Poussin.
[648] Obviously, this would have been detrimental to France and to the pope because of an agreement between a Catholic and non-Catholic monarchy. Zurawski, Ibid., 55-58.
[649] Zurawski, Ibid., 103.
[650] Ibid., 104.

monarchical courts.[651] Thomas Campbell and James G. Harper have pointed out the creation of court tapestry production was a "manifestation of princely magnificence."[652] Francesco Barberini could not lag behind his political counterparts. None of da Cortona's panels were ever reproduced, which reinforces the idea of their exclusiveness to the Barberini collection.[653] Practically, Francesco Barberini sought not a business interest but the enhancement of the Barberini esteem.

Attaching a Barberini signature to the tapestry set involved rewriting the Constantinian story and nullifying the imprint of the French king upon it. Both the decorative borders and the Constantinian narrative invited modifications. A wreath crown replaced the imperial eagle, whereas the presence of the Barberini bees instead of the French king's coat-of-arms signaled the shift in endorsement. In the new pattern, the wreath crown and the monogram allude to the victory through Christological symbolism. With regard to the narrative, the Cardinal did not follow a certain prescribed account on the life of Constantine but rather picked Constantinian deeds that operate, metaphorically, like the bees adorning the Barberini coat-of-arms, from diverse sources. Not only did such a process demonstrate the Cardinal's knowledge of the topic, but it permitted him to create an original chronicle. By introducing the innovative episode from Constantine's adolescence, *Constantine Fighting the Lion*, Francesco Barberini clearly established the beginning of the chronological story in a Barberini scene. Pascal-Francois Bertrand has

[651] The diaries kept by Cassiano del Pozzo during Francesco Barberni's visits as papal legate to Paris in 1625 and Madrid in 1626 reveal the extraordinary impression made by the high-quality tapestries displayed at the two courts on the Italian emissaries (also Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 46-49; Campbell, *Tapestry in the* Baroque, 112).
[652] Campbell, *Tapestry in the Baroque*, 112-114.
[653] By the time of da Cortona's involvement into the project, Francesco Barberni had to know about the reproduction of Rubens' set of the twelve in the Parisian shops. As the report on the tapestry production in Paris sent to him attests to (quoted in Dubon, *Tapestries*, 13). All the undertakings of the Barberini tapestry shop during its ephemeral life remained unique.

aptly noticed that Francesco Barberini intended a "glissement de sens de la tenture," but pointed out only the baldachin and its back panel—the *Statue of Constantine*— as a parallel to the *Cathedra Petri* and thus to the papal power granted by Constantine.[654] The conspicuous interpolation of episodes that could singularly recollect the Constantinian foundations of the papacy, such as the *Baldachin*, were not enough for Francesco Barberini. He visualized a departure from Rubens' narrative as well.

Francesco Barberini rectified Rubens' overwhelmingly imperial chronicle with vital details of the Constantinian legend, in conformity with the ecclesiastical connotations he wished to extract from it. The critical importance in the order were the *Vision of the Cross* (fig. VI. 22) and *Constantine Burning the Memorials* (fig. VI. 24) (1633). A Catholic account of Constantine's deeds could not omit the *Vision of the Cross*—the first theophany that occurred to Constantine—and also *Constantine Destroying the Idols* (fig. VI. 20)—denoting the uprooting of heresy. *Constantine Burning the Memorials* embodied the beneficial actions towards the institution of the Church. In 1636, the set was expanded with the tapestry for the *Baldachin*, a piece that depicts da Cortona's reconstruction of the ancient statue of Constantine on the Campidoglio/in the Roman Forum (fig. VI. 20). The *Baldachin* hinted at the homonymous undertaking of the Barberini in St. Peter's (fig.VI. 30), but in the palace context the canopied structure acted as a throne. The *Sea Battle* (fig. VI. 21) continued the series. It is known that the emperor did not participate in the battle. Therefore, da Cortona's design for the episode was meant to serve as an obvious *paragone* with Rubens' *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, rather than to capture an action of Constantine.

[654] Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 50-52.

Finally, *Constantine Fighting the Lion* (fig. VI. 21), in which a very young Constantine confronts the ferocious animal, connotes the well-known biblical exempla of David and Samson. [655] *Constantine Fighting the Lion* had no palpable reference in the consecrated corpus of Constantinian stories. Although it may be tempting to think that the episode was a Barberini improvisation, the existence of a similar account penned only a decade prior to the production of the tapestry may rather indicate the metaphorical "bee work" of the Barberini. This contemporary writing composed by Rannuccio Pico (*Costantino Magno Imperatore e Guglielmo Duca d'Aquitania aggiunti ai prencipi santi*, 1623) heroized Constantine from the cradle and related Constantine's prodigious victory over the lion as an exemplification of Constantine's adolescence.[656] Pico, who seems to have been careful about acknowledging his sources, cited none for this particular episode. If we are to read his reference method at face value, Pico should be credited with the invention of this episode. Even though Pico drew a parallel between Constantine and the classical hero Hercules, he attributed Constantine's victory to Christian divine intervention. Such a statement contradicted the canonical Constantinian chronology that considered the vision of the Cross as the turning point in Constantine's life. However, this

[655] Da Cortona painted a *David with the Lion* as part of a David cycle for the Sacchetti at the Villa Pigneto on the outskirts of Rome. According to recent studies, the cycle should be dated prior to 1637, the year when the tapestry of *Constantine Fighting the Lion* was produced. For the *David* cycle see Lilian H. Zirpolo, *Ave Papa, Ave Papabile: the Sacchetti family, their art patronage, and political aspirations* (Toronto : Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 97-115. The tapestry depicting *Constantine Fighting the Lion* has almost no longitudinal margins, which may suggest that the piece was designed to fit in a preset location. If the longitudinal margins had been kept, the central panel of the tapestry had had to be reduced. But this solution was not viable as a smaller central panel, in comparison with the other tapestries, would have created an unsettling disproportion.

[656] "l'incito à combattere con un ferocissimo Leone, mostrandogli, che la gloria sua si colmarebbe di maniera, & arrivarebbe à tal segno, che potrebbesi paragonare ad Ercole medessimo…e come Diò fu riverito… egli accetò l'impressa, e così armato solo con la spada coraggiosamente in campo s'affrontò con un fiero Leone, rimase il Leone di più ferrite colpito, le quali per lo molto sangue, che gettavano… con la spunta della spada che gli cacciò molto à dentro nella pancia." Pico, *Costantino Magno Imperatore*, 21.

version was confirmed by Pico's own weaving of events because, according to him, Constantine had been born with the Christian call. This scene which portrayed the courage of the young Constantine was most suitable for exalting the emperor and to lend a note of wonder to the interpretational framework from the very start of the *Life*. The utility of this scene tempted the Barberini once again to look beyond the accepted historical facts and authentic deeds in the life of the first Christian emperor. The Rubens-da Cortona tapestry set, perceived as a whole, obliged the viewer to integrate the panels based on Rubens' design into a context imbued with religious suggestions. Equipped with such a hermeneutical apparatus, the viewer was induced to absorb the last two episodes of the series—the *Foundation of Constantinople* and the *Death of Constantine*—in a favorable light for the papacy.

Despite the recontextualization of Rubens' narrative with the addition of the da Cortona scenes, there were, in Rubens' sequence, elements that without any doubt echoed papal convictions with regard to Constantine. Not only did Rubens insert what was believed to be accurate archaeological elements in portraying the Roman world and localizing Rome and Constantinople but his quotations of modern papal and Roman art, and theologically canonical art, could be read in Rome as references employed in order to confer significance and filiation upon the Constantinian story. [657] Rubens' method of citation was not *ad literam* but involved a recontextualization of the visual excerpt. The *Baptism of Constantine* (fig. VI. 10) recalls the homonymous episode from the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican (fig. III. 10)—the visual source for subsequent representation of

[657] It is known that Rubens collaborated closely with Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc for finding ancient sources. The two of them worked together on a project to publish engravings initially after ancient cameos and then enlarged to coins, vases, busts, and different antiquities of Rome. Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens*, 30-37; Jaffé, "The Barberini Circle," 119-147.

this subject. The gestures of Constantine and the bishop in the *Death of Constantine* have parallels in works by Raphael: the gestures of Plato and Aristotle in the *School of Athens* and those of the protagonists of the quarrel of the universals in the *Dispute over the Sacrament*. The bodies hanging from the remnants of the bridge in the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge* remind the viewer a similar posture in the *Fire in the Borgo* by Raphael and his workshop. Rubens' *modello* for the *Foundation of Constantinople* presents the emperor Constantine in a creation gesture that quotes the gesture of the figure of God in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* and the related figure of Christ in Caravaggio's *Calling of St. Matthew*. These well-known visual precedents were employed by Rubens to give weight to the representation of the act of creation and change: Michelangelo's alerted the viewer to the creation of humankind, whereas Caravaggio's to the possible metamorphosis of individuals able to apprehend the divine message explicated through the life of the Evangelist Matthew. In Rubens' *Foundation of Constantinople,* Constantine's gesture points to creation materialized through the Christian city of Constantinople in the aftermath of the emperor's personal transformation when he abjured the heathen cults and embraced Christianity. Constantine founds the first Christian city, the new Rome, capable of mirroring the ideals to which he recently adhered. Furthermore, Rubens' recontextualization of the visual quotes would have pleased the Barberini with regard to the usage of the twisted columns in the very tapestry that was shown to Francesco Barberini on the occasion of offering the diplomatic gift, the *Baptism of Constantine*. Evidently, Rubens looked at existing Constantinian imagery and architectural vestiges in Rome. Yet, he did not reproduce the columns of the Lateran Baptistery. Those designed by Rubens did come from a Constantinian context however.

They were the Solomonic columns built into the basilica of St. Peter erected by Constantine, consecrated by St. Sylvester in the presence of Constantine, and reconsecrated by Urban VIII exactly thirteenth centuries later, in 1626.[658] The same type were quoted in the massive bronze columns of the most conspicuous addition of the Barberini to St. Peter's, the *Baldachin* designed by Bernini (1624-1633; fig. VI. 39).[659] The play of visual citation delineates a meaningful mode of dialoguing with the Constantinian heritage. Although such details indisputably made an impression upon the papal court, their subordination within a predominantly imperial version of Constantine's *Vita* prompt the Cardinal-nephew to reframe them within an expanded cycle that gave the narrative an ecclesiastical perspective.

Conclusion

The Donation of Constantine ceased to be invoked but its implicit claims survived, embedded within less provocative Constantinian episodes. The *Baptism* accommodating constitutive elements of the *Donation of Constantine*, could maintain its

[658] Urban VIII reconsecrated the basilica on November 18, 1626. Eleven Solomonic columns have survived. Eight of them had been incorporated in the balcony altars of the crossing. See Irving Lavin, *Bernini and the crossing of Saint Peter's*, (New York: New York University Press, 1968), 10-18. Other two of them were enshrined in the altarpiece of St. Maurice during the massive reconfiguration of the basilica. See Louise Rice, *The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter's* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 213-215. The *Baldachin* commissioned by Urban VIII from Bernini in 1624 has massive bronze columns of the Solomonic type (almost like reliquary recipients of the original marble ones). In addition, Rubens may have been tempted to substitute the Lateran with the Solomonic columns also because the Solomonic Temple was the stage of numerous miraculous healings performed by Jesus and the Apostles (one such visual example is the tapestry depicting the *Healing of the Lame Man* based on Raphael's cartoon; the motif of Solomonic columns was abundantly used in the period, for instance by Giulio Romano and Giorgio Vasari). As Constantine suffered from leprosy and was cured by the baptismal water, the reference to miraculous healing may have motivated Rubens to use the Solomonic columns.

[659] See Lavin, *Bernini*, 19-35; Sebastian Schütze, "Urbano inalza Pietro, Pietro Urbano," *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* XXIX (1994): 213-87; William C. Kirwin, *Powers matchless: the Pontificate of Urban VIII, the Baldachin, and Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (New York: P. Lang, 1997); Marder, *Bernini*, 27-46.

pendant role to any proxy of the latter's, such as the *Foundation of Constantinople*. The *Death of Constantine* presented the transfer of secular power, but it could be ignored by papal proponents on the premise of its specificity to the East. The foundation of Constantinople and the transfer of Constantine to the city defined the papacy's right to rule the abandoned West.

The tapestry set was designed for an unspecified location. With its completion by the Barberini, it was displayed primarily in the *Gran Salone* of the newly designed Barberini Palace in Rome (figs. VI. 37, 38).[660] Although scholars agree on the principal location of the tapestry set, one must consider the flexibility of the tapestry display and thus the potential of the cycle to have decorated other spaces than the one for which it was mainly intended.[661] The tapestries adorned the long walls of the *Gran Salone* in the majestic Palazzo Barberini with notable historical deeds. The rich medium of the tapestry and the subject-matter emerged as a clear expression of the decorum of place.[662] Though a private dwelling, the Barberini Palace was decorated primarily with frescoes

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[660] The Barberini concluded the deal of buying out the Sforza Palace, the future Barberini Palace, on the Via alle Quattro Fontane on December 18, 1625, one day after Franceso Barberini's return from his mission to France. Constructions on the palace were carried out intensively in the next decades. The completion of tapestry set (1630-1642) coincided with the decoration of the ceiling (1632-1639) of the *Gran Salone* by the same da Cortona. The tapestries were displayed in the *Gran Salone* only on important occasions. Expanding on Urbano Barberini's and David Dubon's hypothesis, Simone A. Zurawski concluded that the tapestry set had been created for decorating the lateral walls of the *Gran Salone* in the Pallazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane. Based on the concomitant execution of the tapestries and the *salone* ceiling, on the existence of other small pieces of the set such as the *portières* and the *sopraporte*, on the various dimensions of the tapestry pieces in relation to the hall size, and on the eventual continuity—not necessarily chronological but of action—among adjacent episodes, Simone A. Zurawski concluded with a scheme of "nearly-exact chronological progression" unfolded on the two long walls of the *Gran Salone*.

[661] The *Life of Constantine* tapestries could have been brought over to the Palazzo della Cancelleria, the new residence of Francesco Barberini in his new position as a papal vice-chancellor starting with 1632. Palazzo della Cancelleria lacked a Constantinian imagery, so the temporal decoration with the Constantine tapestry set may have been desirable on important meetings. Outer display is conceivable as well. See James G. Harper, "Collectors and Connoisseurs: the Status and Perception of Tapestry, 1600-1660," in *Tapestry in the Baroque Threads of Splendor*, ed. Thomas P. Campell (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 112-25.

[662] For my discussion of the decorum of place, see Chapter III.

representing sacred history. The Barberini took seriously their mission of administering the Church. The *Gran Salone* represented the public space were the Barberini advertised their agenda, and where, on important occasions, the *Life of Constantine* tapestries complemented the *Triumph of Divine Providence* fresco ceiling by da Cortona (fig. VI. 23b). Whereas the latter propounded the divine dimension of the papacy, the Constantinian story addressed its institutional foundation. Scholars have referred to the complementarity of da Cortona's *Triumph of Divine Providence* fresco and the *Life of Constantine* tapestry cycle, in terms of sacred power and temporal power.[663] I would propose, instead, that the frescoes and tapestries together provided a vivid illustration of the two coexistent theories of the source of papal temporal power: one apostolic and the other originating in the Constantinian era.

For the Barberini and their followers, the experience of sitting in the *Grand Salone*, and beholding the *Life of Constantine* tapestries, may have been similar to the one in the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican. In the Vatican Sala popes empowered themselves with the Constantinian legend, by listening to sermons right before preaching to the crowd.[664] The most compelling scenes with regard to the Constantinian legitimization of the papacy in the Sala di Constantino in the Vatican were the *Donation of Constantine* and its pendant, the *Baptism*. The tapestry cycle had just the *Baptism* scene, imbued as it was with connotations related to the *Donation of Constantine*. There

[663] Zurawski, *Peter Paul Rubens* 180; Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini*, 52. See also John B. Scott, *Images of Nepotism: the Painted Ceilings of Palazzo Barberini* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 191.

[664] For my discussion, and archival evidence, on this issue see Chapter III. Scholars have evidenced the interest of the Barberini in creating a deep symbolic relationship between the Barberini Palace and the Vatican Palace through architecture and decoration. See Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (New York and Cambridge, Architectural History Foundation: MIT Press, 1990), 215-20; Schütze, "Urbano VIII e il concetto," 92.

was, however, one scene that could be singled out from the *Life of Constantine* tapestries as a proxy for the *Donation of Constantine:* the *Foundation of Constantinople*. The Barberini and their versed guests could visualize that superimposition of meaning. A, religious interpretation of Constantine's life which Francesco Barberini had provided when he extended the cycle with da Cortona's additional scenes facilitated this substitution. Contemporary textual sources, some of which could become vehicles for responses to either Louis XIII or the Barberini, as well as the dual-faceted restoration of the Lateran Triclinium, show the interest in making the foundation of Constantinople a proxy for the Donation. If necessary, Francesco Barberini could dissimulate the meaning he projected on the *Foundation of Constantinople* as he had similarly done in France with Alemanni's *De Lateranensibus Parientinis*. The proxy accommodated dissimulation because while it was empowered to act for another episode it could pretend to represent exclusively itself.

The completion of the tapestry set by the Barberini closed the circle of direct exchange regarding the theory of papal power between Louis XIII and the papal court. Motivated by the need to reciprocate with an explicitly Christian token and to respond to the thesis exposed by Alemanni on the Lateran Tricilinium, the French court offered the diplomatic gift of the *Life of Constantine*. In Rome, the Barberini appropriated the *Life of Constantine* by effecting a significant alteration of its narrative. Rubens' chronicle of the *Life of Constantine* could be changed through the addition of new episodes, but few of Louis XIII's attributes, such as his coat-of-arms, could not be effaced from the pieces received in Paris. At the papal court, the *Foundation of Constantinople* illustrated not the transfer of the locus of imperial power but the disruption of its presence in Rome. In this

scenario, Rome, metonymically signaling the West, had come into the possession of the papacy. Thus, the *Foundation of Constantinople* became what I have called a proxy for the Donation of Constantine. Urban VIII, along with his cardinal-nephew Francesco Barberini, believed in the patrimony of the Church (*Patrimonia Sancti Petri*) with origins in the *translatio imperii ad Orientem* in the newly founded city of Constantinople. Urban VIII sought to preserve the *Patrimonia* by founding the *Congregazione dei Confini*. At the Barberini court, the simultaneous display of the tapestries executed in Paris and Rome plausibly advertized a harmonious union between the king and the pope. This ideal of a harmonious union, however, was a Barberini dissimulation that concealed the lack of political consensus that brought the peculiar Rubens-da Cortona series into being.

Epilogue

The study of the critical fortune of the visual theme of the Donation of Constantine emphasizes the effort of the papacy to maintain the doctrine of the Constantinian origin of its temporal power. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represented a period when the papal prerogatives needed not to be established but rather justified. However, the proof and crucial element in the process of justification, the series of historical donations, coincided with those of the establishment and confirmation of the papal prerogatives. Amongst the various donations, the Donation of Constantine was foundational.

Papal commissions of public Constantinian imagery surfaced even after the pontificate of Alexander VII, the end point of this dissertation. The restored ancient statue believed to represent Constantine that was placed in the narthex of the Lateran Basilica in the eighteenth century represents such an example. However, the Donation of Constantine continued to live in a more consistent manner through the rites of investiture, effectively in a performative way. Once crowned, the newly elected pontiff embarked on his *possesso,* his triumphal cavalcade through the city of Rome culminating with his appointment as the Bishop of Rome in the Lateran Basilica. The *possesso* route had a starting point in Constantine's new Campidoglio—St. Peter's—a halt on the old Campidoglio where Constantinian imagery and an ephemeral arch honoring the new pontiff was present, a passing by the Arch of Constantine, and an arrival point at the

Lateran. The departure point represented the place where Constantine offered the official juridical document of the Donation. The destination point, the Lateran, was the place where Constantine had been baptized, an event that had marked his personal metamorphosis and that had stimulated him toward his act of Donation. Moreover, the Lateran was a Constantinian locus *par excellence* due to the Constantinian baptistery, the Constantinian Basilica, and the Lateran Palace ceded by Constantine to the pontiffs for its usage as their dignified dwelling. Both the Lateran Basilica and Palace were involved in the *possesso* ceremony. From the Basilica, the pontiff climbed the Scalone Pontificale into the Salone di Costantino of the palace (figs. IV. 25, 26), the hall decorated in honor of Constantine in 1589 during the pontificate of Sixtus V and where a *Donation* belonged to the fresco cycle (fig. IV. 29). While climbing the Scalone Pontificale and entering the Salone di Costantino, the new pontiff could see the *Possesso of St. Sylvester I* (fig. IV. 27), the very origin of the rite he was performing. From the Salone di Costantino, the route within the palace concluded with the pontiff's stepping into the Benediction Loggia on the lateral entrance of the Lateran Basilica, where a Constantinian cycle dating also from the pontificate of Sixtus V adorned the lunettes of the loggia (fig. V. 32). While facing the piazza for giving the benediction to the faithful, the pontiff's physical presence was bracketed by the frescoes of the *Donation* and *Baptism of Constantine* (figs. V. 35, 36). The last public gesture of the investiture ceremony, the benediction of the faithful, coincided with an overt confirmation of the Constantinian source of the papal prerogatives. The *possesso* itself established its embodied force to act as a proxy for the Donation.

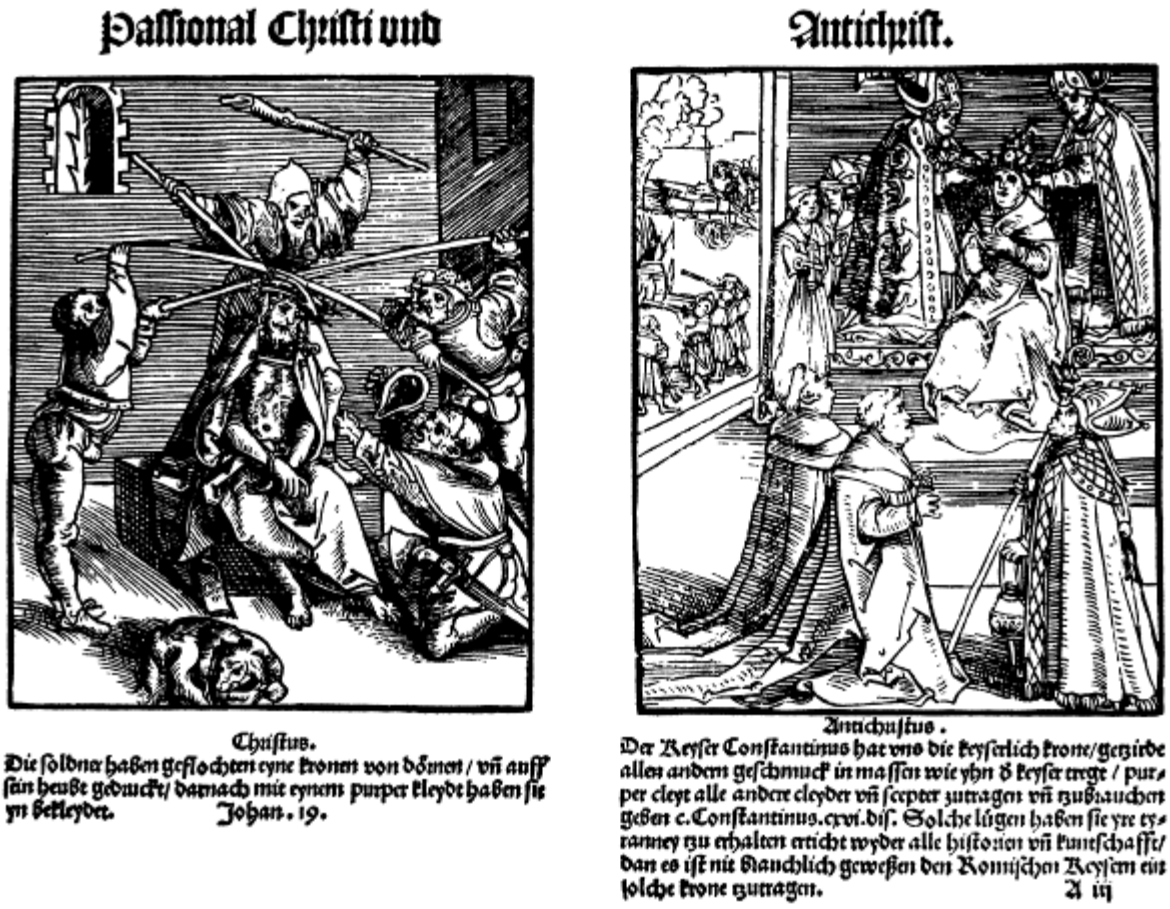
This dissertation has exposed the intricate strategies adopted in propelling

messages of political art. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Constantinian imagery became the forum for expressing political concepts on the extent of papal prerogatives. The most relevant Constantinian episode for this topic was the *Donation of Constantine*. Nevertheless, as the papacy encountered increasing opposition in its efforts to continue justifying juridically its rights to temporal power through the Donation, other Constantinian episodes appeared ideal proxies for the Donation or bearers of constitutive elements of the Donation. While the Donation of Constantine represents a specific case of political art, the notions of "proxy" and "host episode" may be positively explored within other diverse political contexts where and when art served an organ of power.

Figures

I.1. *Arch of Constantine*, 4th century, Rome.

I.2. Herman van Swanevelt, *Arch of Constantine*, drawing, 17th century, inv 23029, recto, the Louvre



I.3. Lucas Cranach, *Passional Christi und Antichristi*, 1521.

II.1. Andrea Sacchi, *Decisions of the Council of Nicaea*, details, 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

II.2. *Constantine* page from *Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea Sive Sactor*, Rome, 1582, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Rome.

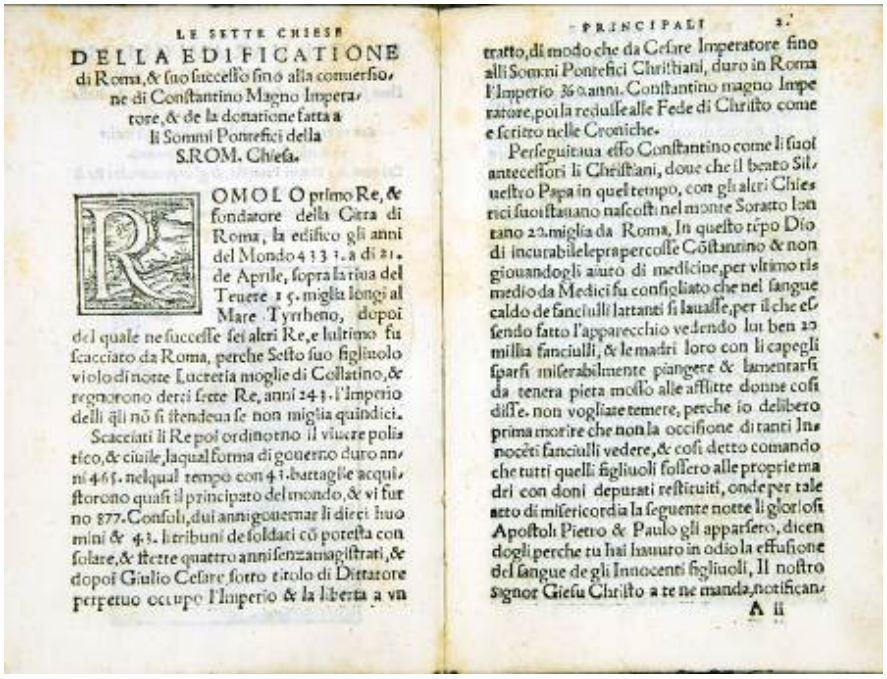
II.3. The Lateran Baptistery (protruding to the left: Chapel of St. John the Baptist).

II.4. Galeazzo Leoncino, *The Council of 324 in S. Martino ai Monti*, fresco, 1640, S.S. Silvestro e Martino ai Monti, Rome.

II.5. Sancta Sanctorum, Rome.

II.6. Ottavio Tronsarelli, *Il Costantino*, frontispice, Rome, 1629.

II.7. *Constantine* in Alessandro Donato, *Constantinus Romae Liberator*, 1640.



LE SETTE CHIESE

DELLA EDIFICATIONE

di Roma, & suo successo fino alla conuersio-
ne di Constantino Magno Impera-
tore, & de la donatione fatta a
li Sommi Pontefici della
S.ROM. Chiesa.

ROMOLO primo Re, & fondatore della Città di Roma, la edificò gli anni del Mondo 4331. a dì 21. de Aprile, sopra la riua del Teuere 15. miglia longi al Mare Tyrrheno, dopoi del quale ne successe sei altri Re, e l'ultimo fu scacciato da Roma, perche Sesto suo figliuolo violò di notte Lucretia moglie di Collatino, & regnorono dersi sette Re, anni 243. l'Imperio delli quì nō si stendeua se non miglia quindici.

Scacciati li Re poi ordinorno il viuere politico, & ciuile, laqual forma di gouerno duro anni 465. nelqual tempo con 43. battaglie acquistorono quasi il principato del mondo, & vi furno 877. Consoli, dui annigouernar li dieci huomini & 43. Tribuni de soldati cō potestà consolare, & stette quattro anni senza magistrati, & dopoi Giulio Cesare sotto titolo di Dittatore perpetuo occupò l'Imperio & la libertà a vn

PRINCIPALI 2.

tratto, di modo che da Cesare Imperatore fino alli Sommi Pontefici Christiani, duro in Roma l'Imperio 360. anni. Constantino magno Imperatore, poi la reduste alle Fede di Christo come e scritto nelle Croniche.

Perseguitaua esso Constantino come li suoi antecessori li Christiani, doue che il beato Siluestro Papa in quel tempo, con gli altri Chierici suoi stauano nascosti nel monte Soratto lontano 20. miglia da Roma, In questo tēpo Dio di incurabile leprapercosse Cōstantino & non giouandogli aiuto di medicine, per vltimo rimedio da Medici fu consigliato che nel sangue caldo de fanciulli lattanti si lauasse, per il che essendo fatto l'apparecchio vedendo lui ben 20 millia fanciulli, & le madri loro con li capegli sparsi miserabilmente piangere & lamentarsi da tenera pieta mosso alle afflitte donne cosi disse. non vogliate temere, perche io delibero prima morire che non la occisione di tanti Innocēti fanciulli vedere, & cosi detto comando che tutti quelli figliuoli fossero alle proprie madri con doni depurati restituiti, onde per tale atto di misericordia la seguente notte li gloriosi Apostoli Pietro & Paulo gli apparsero, dicendogli perche tu hai hauuto in odio la effusione del sangue de gli Innocenti figliuoli, Il nostro signor Giesu Christo a te ne manda, notifican-

A ii

II. 8. *Le cose maravigliose dell'alma città di Roma*, 1550.

LE SETTE
CHIESE PRINCIPALI.

TEMPL. S. IOANNIS LATERANEN

LA PRIMA CHIESA È S. GIOVANNI Laterano.

A prima Chiesa, che è sede del Pontefice è quella di san Giouanni Laterano, nel monte Celio, che fù edificata dal Magno Constantino, nel suo Palazzo, & dotata di grande intrate. Essendo guasta, e rouinata da gli Heretici. Nicolao IIII. la rifece, e Martino V. la cominciò à far dipingere, & lastricare il pauimento, & Eugenio

A 2 Quarto

PRINCIPALI. 11

LA SECONDA CHIESA
è San Pietro in Vaticano.

TEMPLVM·DIVI·PETRI·

La chiesa di S. Pietro in Vaticano fu edificata, e dotata dal Magno Costantino, e consecrata da S. Siluestro alli 18. di Nouemb. Vi è stationi il dì dell'Epifania, la prima, e quinta Domenica di quaresima, il sabbato dopò la detta prima Domenica, & il lunedì di Pasqua, il dì dell'Ascensione, il dì della Pentecoste, il sabbato dopò la Pentecoste il sabbato di tutte le quattro tempora, & la terza Domenica dell'Auento, la prima e quarta Domenica dell'Auento, il giorno del Corpo di Christo, & delle cathedre di S.

36 LE SETTE CHIESE

LA TERZA CHIESA
è San Paolo

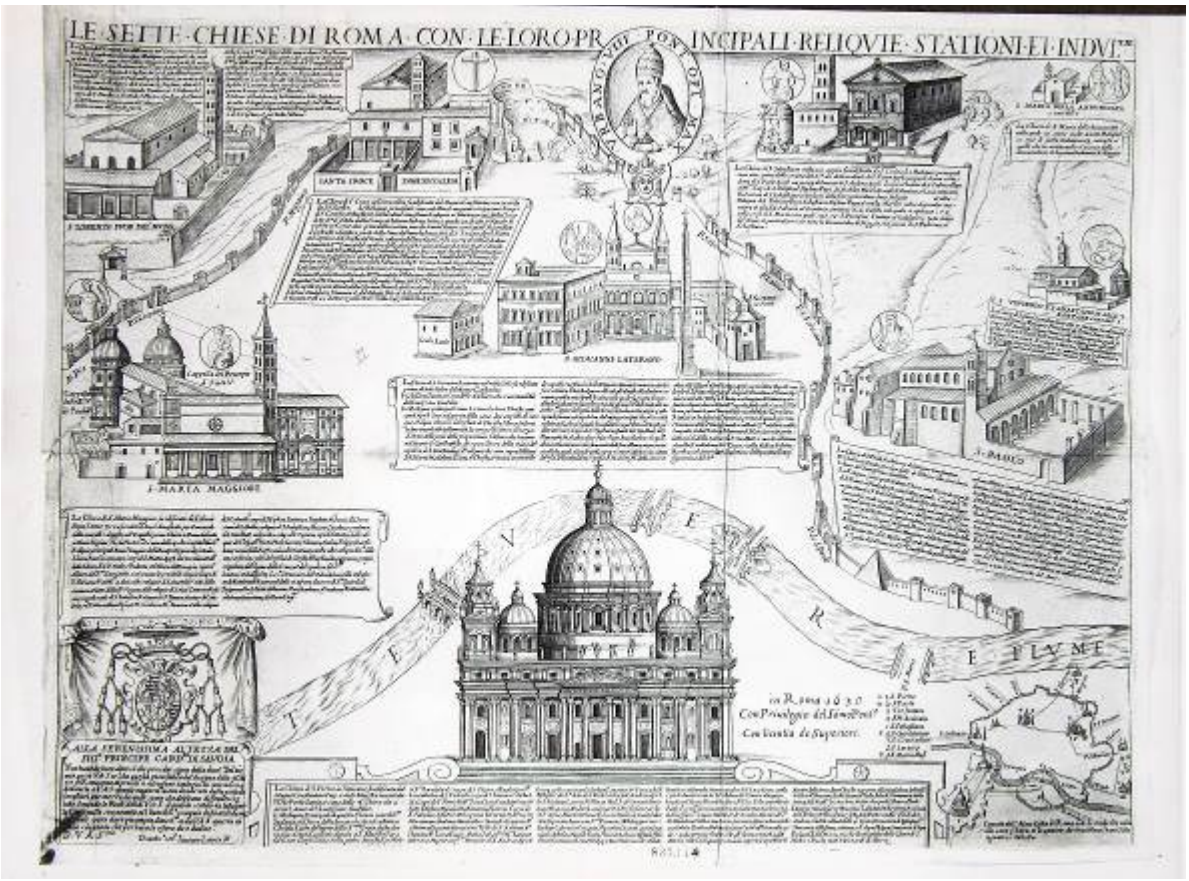
TEMPLVM DIVI PAVLI.

SAn Paolo. Questa chiesa è nella via Ostiense fuori di Roma circa vn miglio, e fu edificata, dotata, & ornata come quella di S. Pietro dal Magno Costantino, nel luogo dove fu miracolosamente ritrouata la testa di San Paolo Apostolo; & è ornata di grandissime colonne e similmente d'altissimi architraui, e fu poi ornata di varij marmi marauigliosamente intagliati, da Honorio IV. & fu consecrata da S. Siluestro il medemo giorno, che fu consecrata, quella di S. Pietro, vi è stationе il mercordi

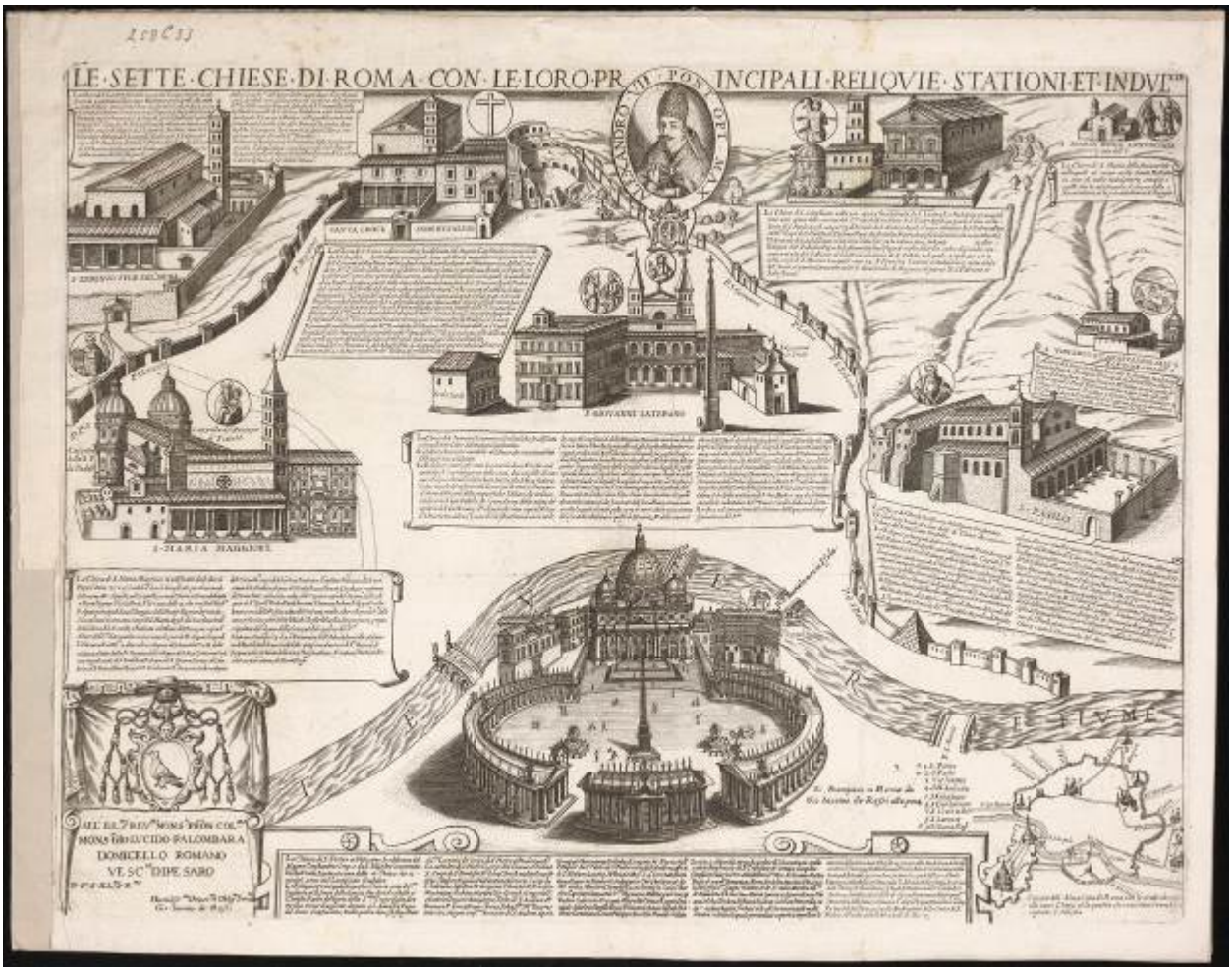
II.9c. *Le cose meravigliose della città di Roma*, Roma, 1590.

II.10a. Giovanni Maggi, *S. Croce in Gerusaleme*, Roma, 1625.

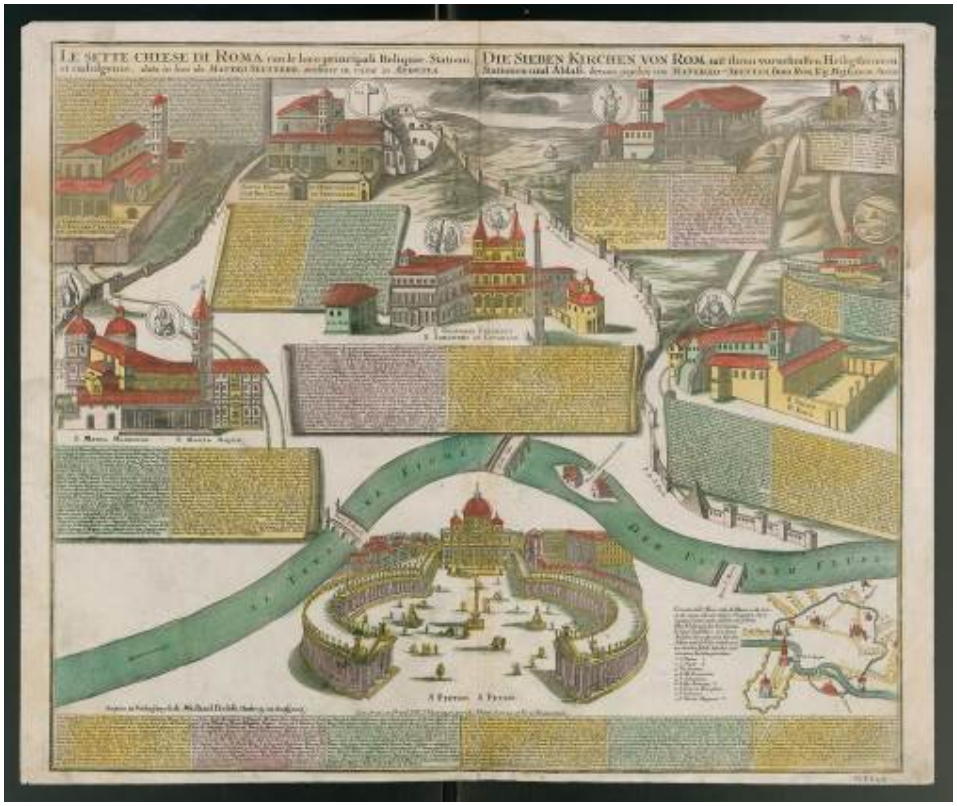
II.10b. Giovanni Maggi, *S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura*, Roma, 1625.



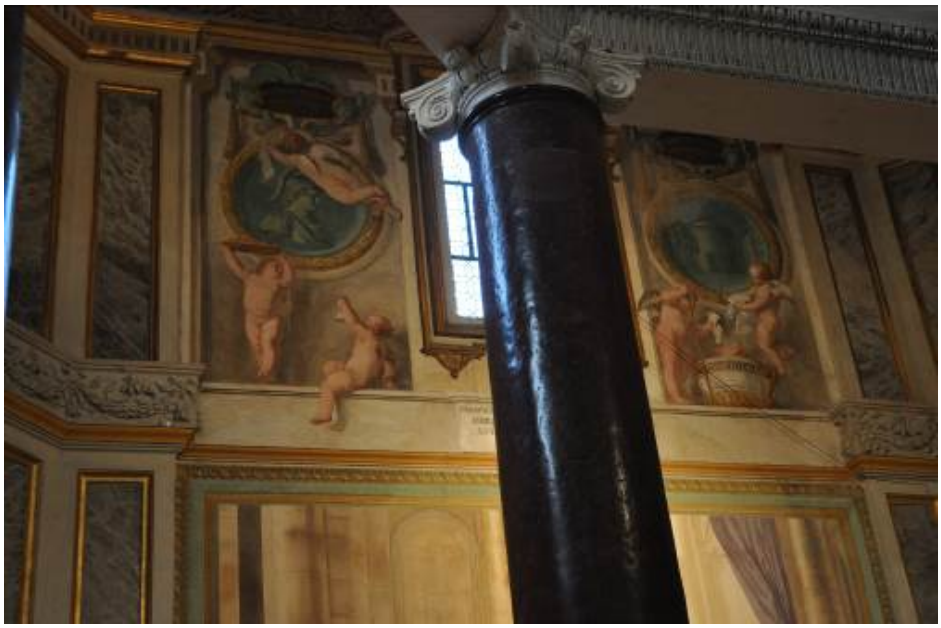
II.10c. *Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, Roma, 1630.



II.10d. *Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, Roma, 1655-67.



II.10e. *Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, Roma, 1655-67.



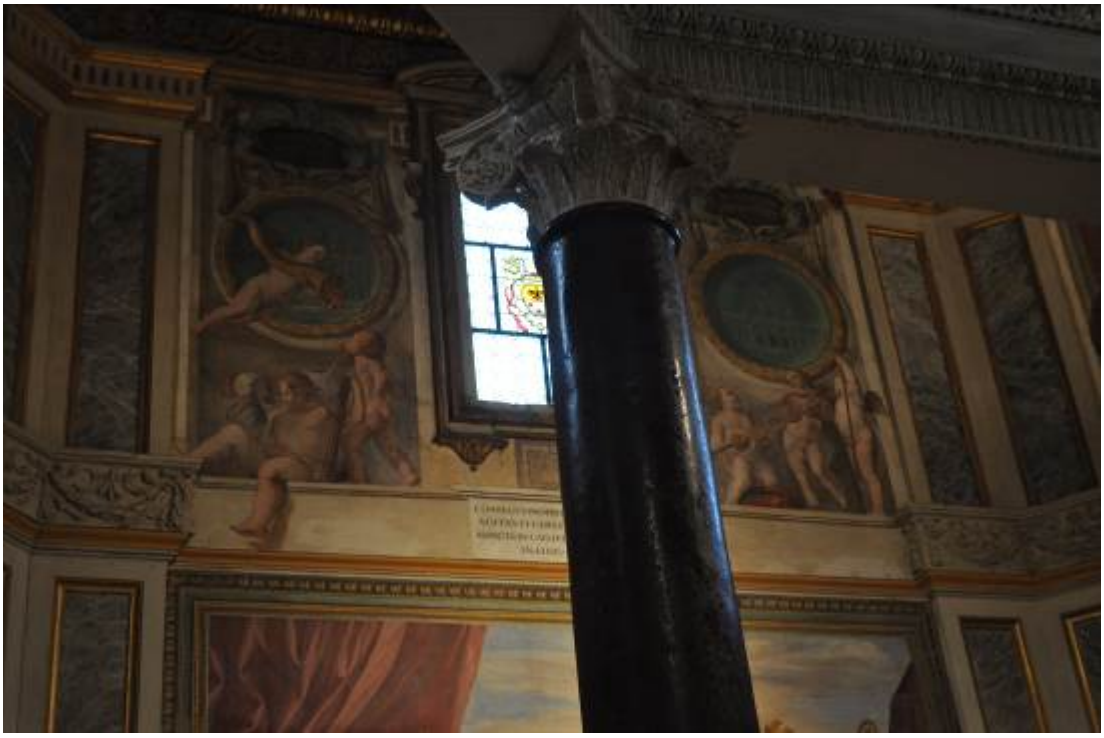
II.11. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Church of SS. Pietro e Marcellino,* 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

II.12. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Church of S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura*, 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

II.13. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Lateran Baptistery*, 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

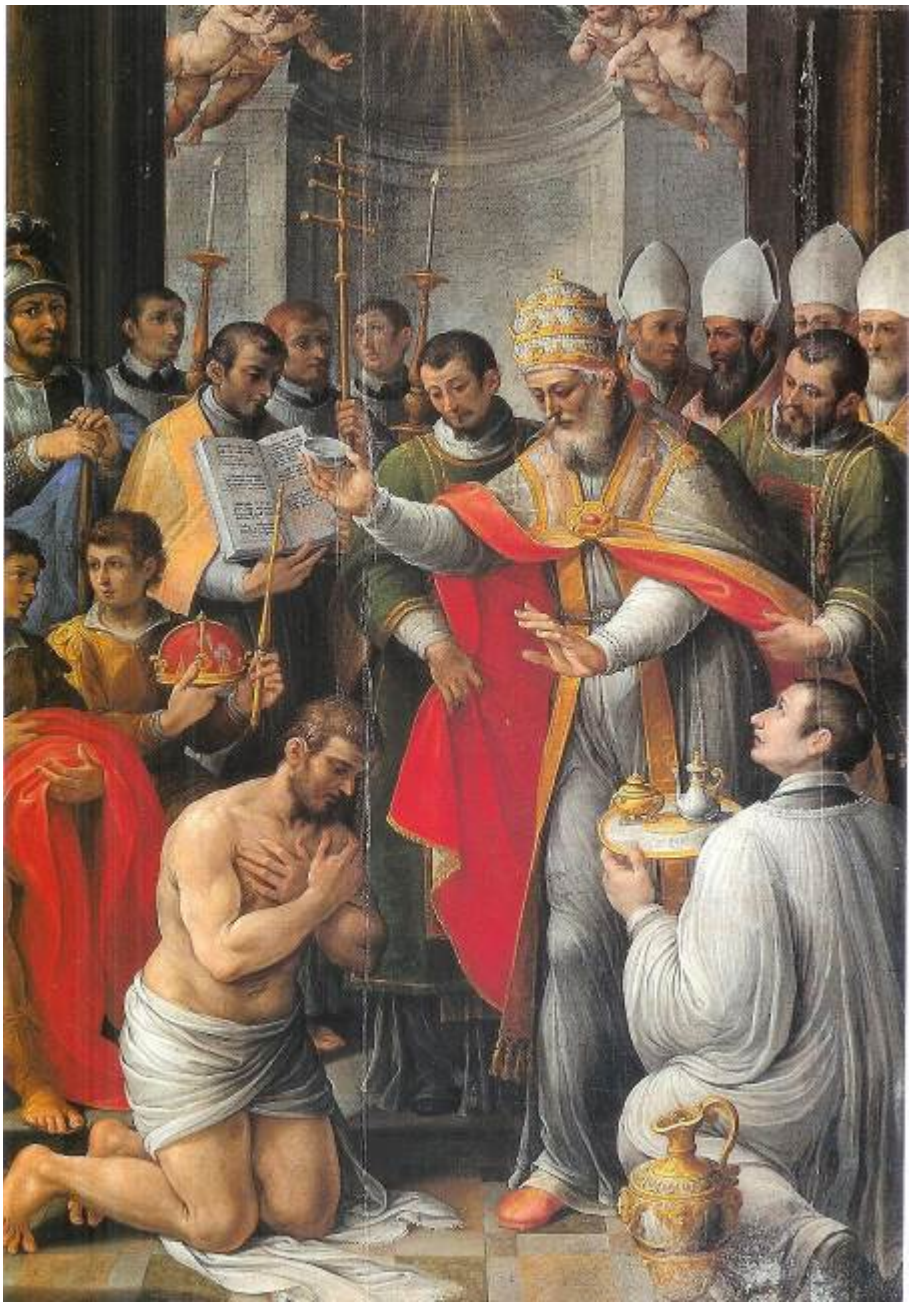
II.14. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusaleme*, 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

II.15. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Church of San Paolo fuori le Mura*, 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.



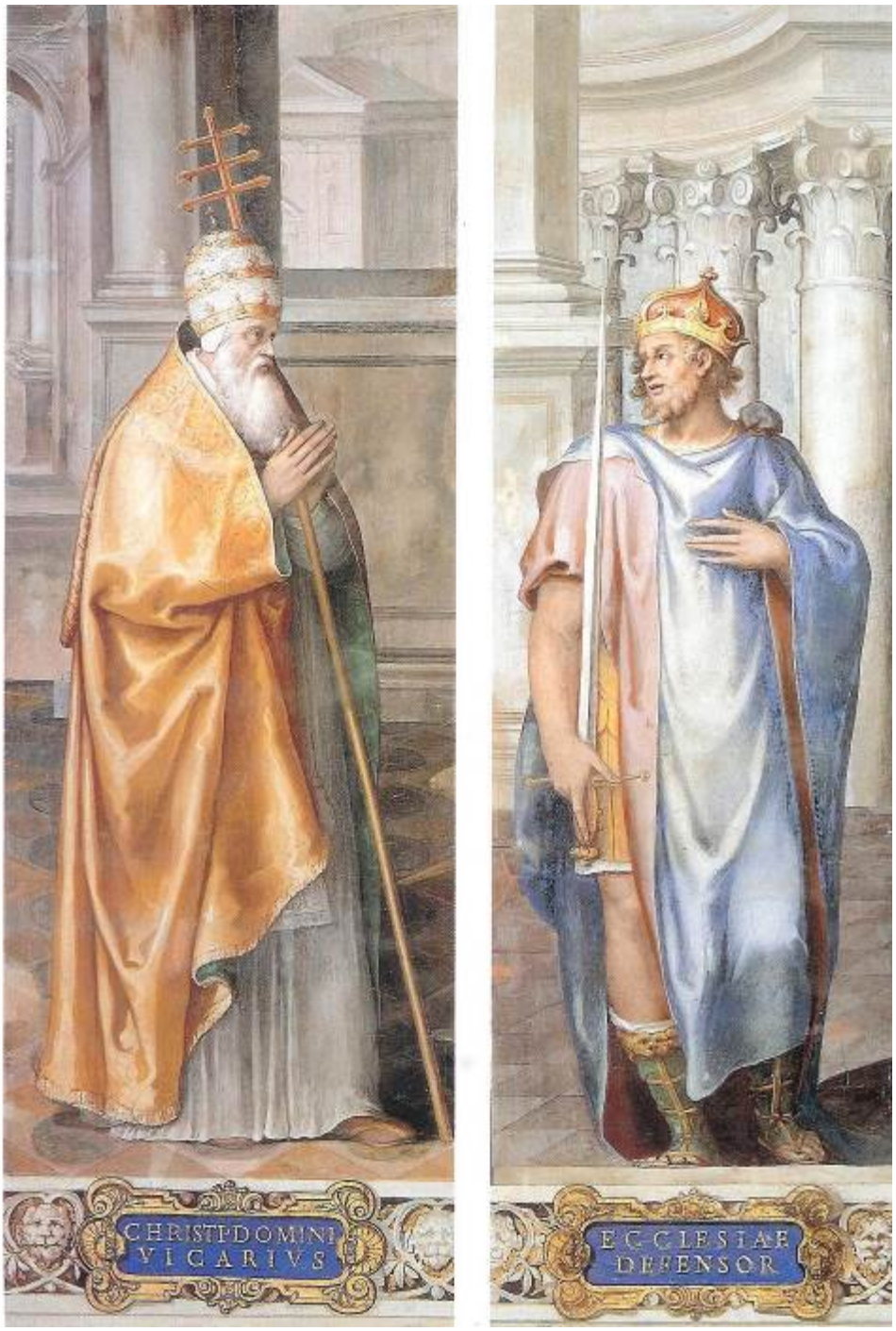
II.16. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Medal with the Church of San Pietro,* 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

II.17. Andrea Sacchi and others, *Constantine and Pope Sylvester,* 1640s, the Lateran Baptistery, Rome.

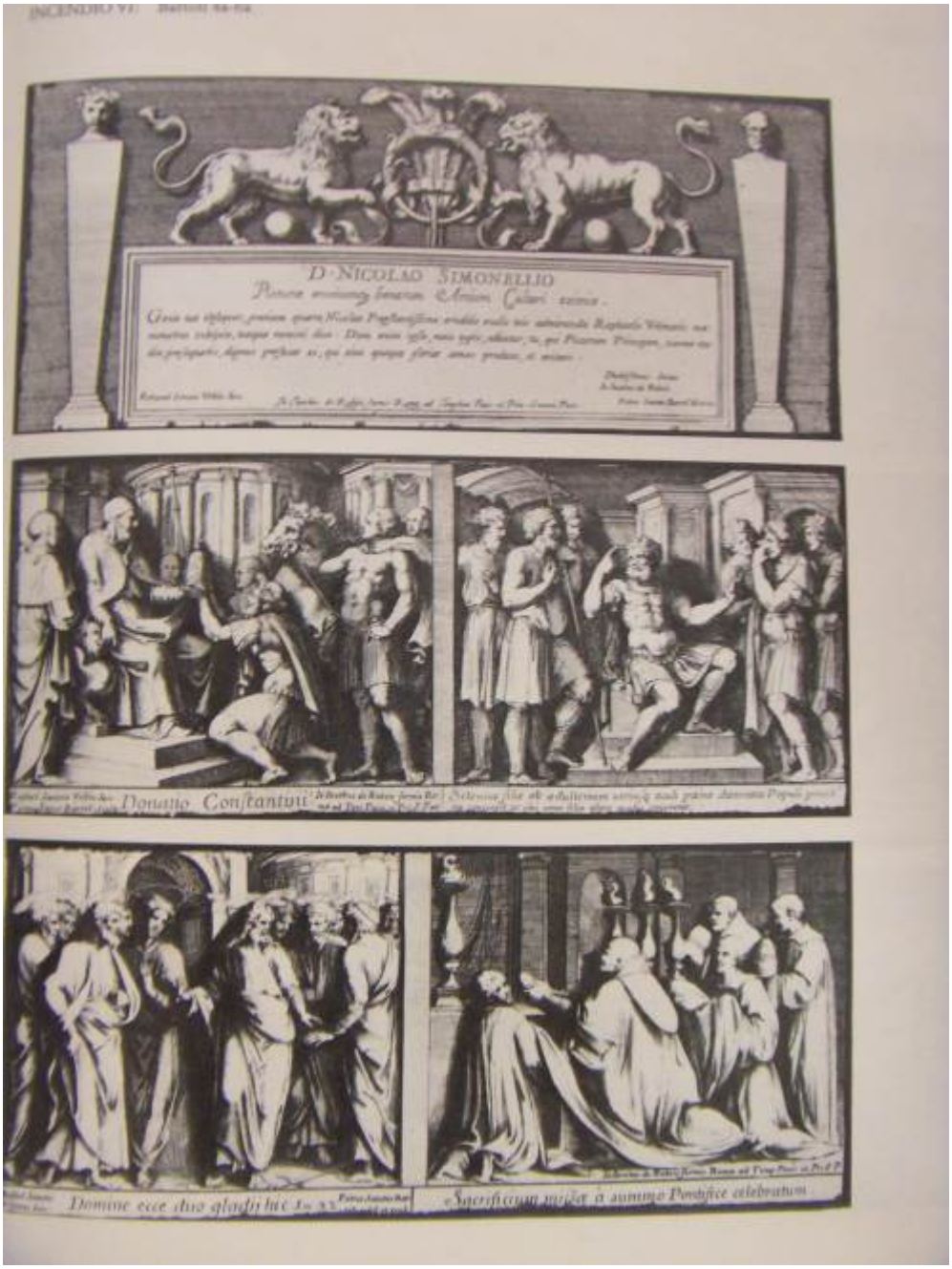


II.18. Avanzino Nucci, *The Baptism of Constantine*, ca. 1580, San Silvestro al Quirinale.

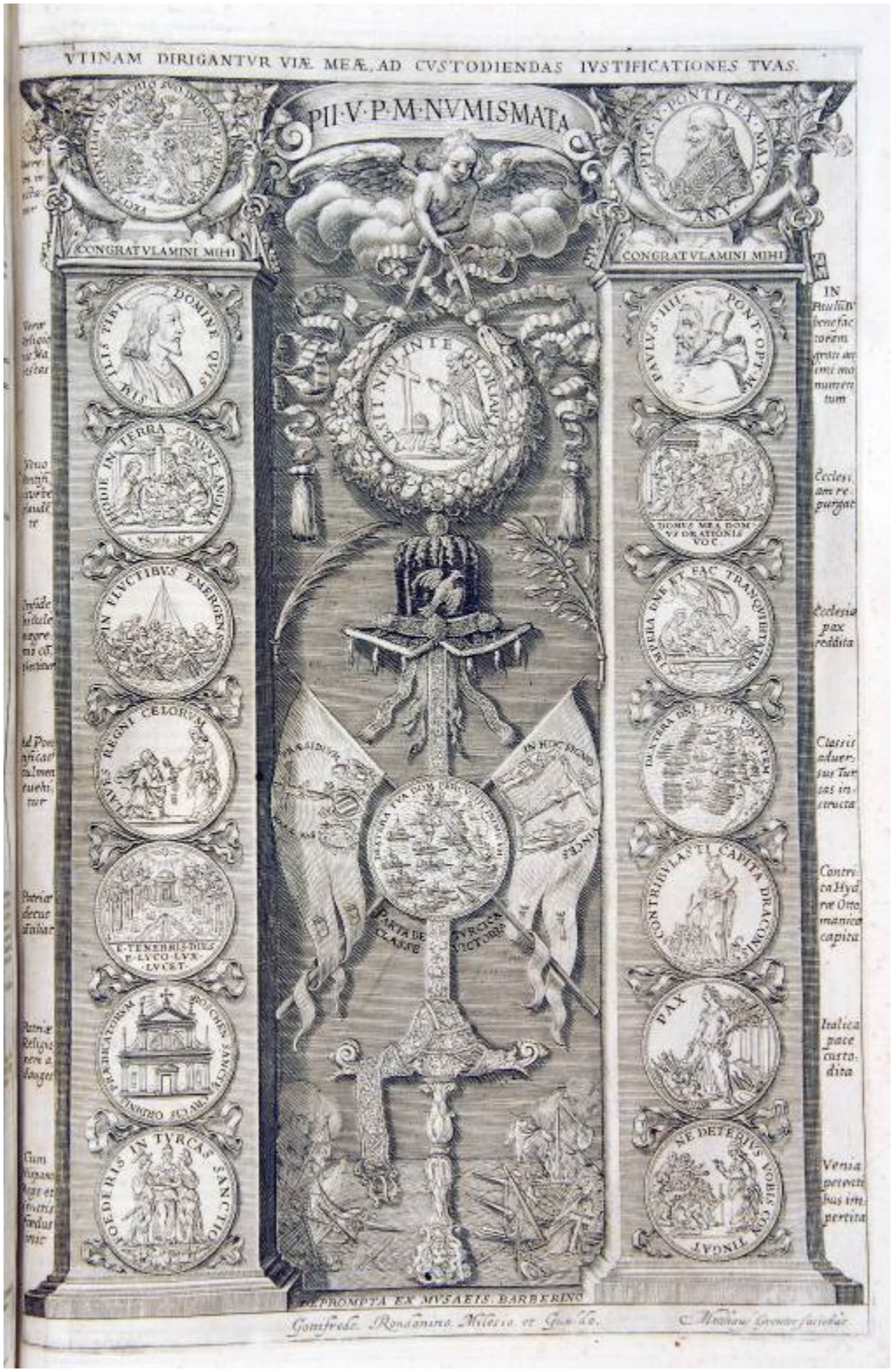
II.19. Ludovico Gimignano, *Baptism of Constantine*, ca. 1690., San Silvestro in Capite, Rome.



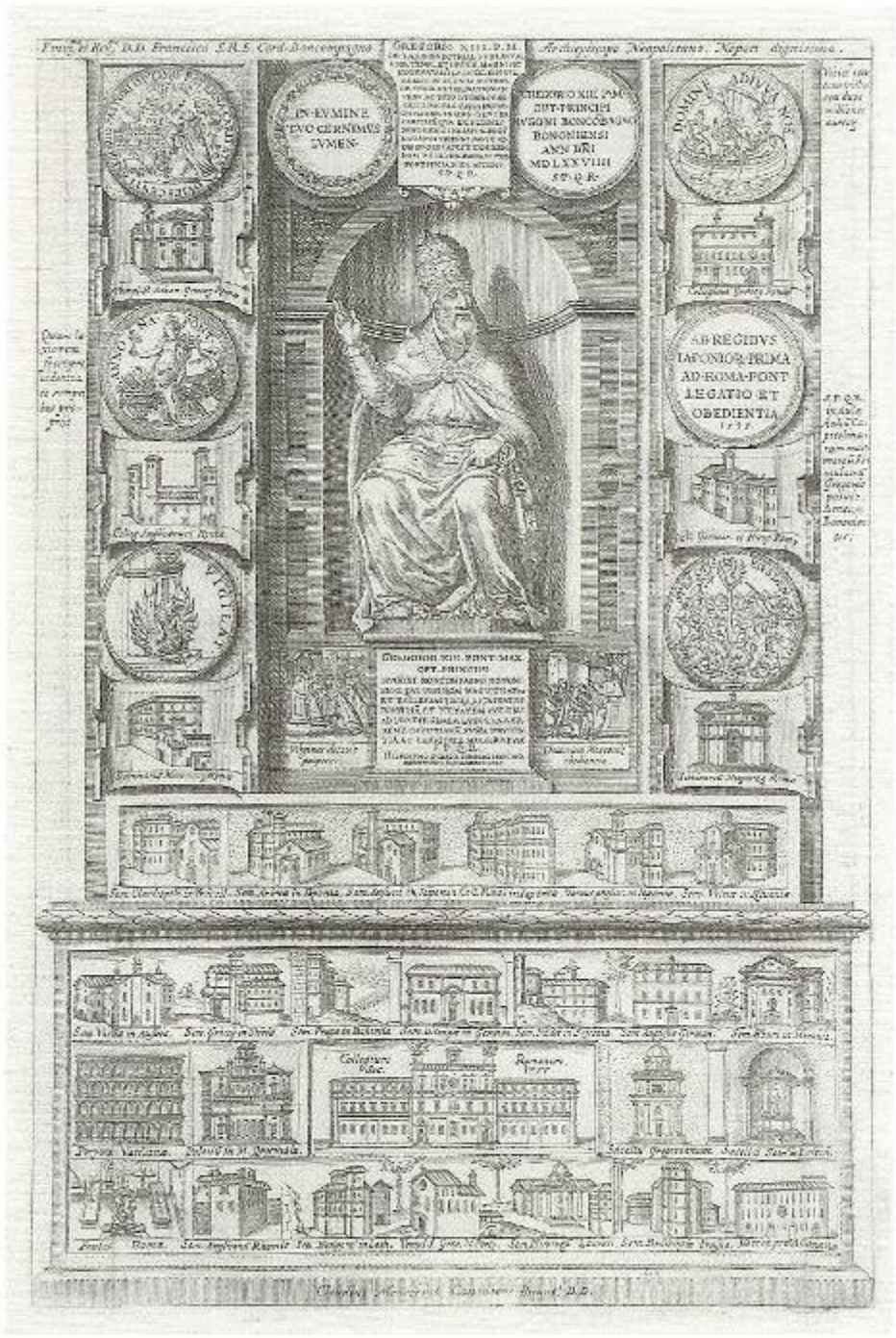
II.20. *St. Sylvester* and *Constantine*, ca. 1587, Salone Sisitino, the Vatican.



III.1. Pietro Santi Bartolli, *Engravings after Raphael, Stanza di Eliodoro*, ca. 1677. Calcografia, Rome.
Top left: *The Donation of Constantine.*



III.2. Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Numismatic Page for Pius V, Vitae, et res gestae pontificum Romanorum,* Romae: Philippi, et Ant. de Rubeis, 1677.



III.3. Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Numismatic Page for Gregory XIII, Vitae, et res gestae pontificum Romanorum*, Romae : Philippi, et Ant. de Rubeis, 1677.

III.4. Egnatio Danti, *Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-1581.

III.4a. *The Vision of the Cross*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-81.

III.4b. *Constantine Building the Basilica of St. Peter,* Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-1581.

III.4c. *Constantine Building the Basilica of St. Paul,* Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-1581.

III.4d. *The Baptism of Constantine*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-1581.

III.4e. *The Possesso of St. Sylvester I*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, ca. 1580-1581.

III.5. *Italia Antiqua*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1580-81; 1630's.

III.6. *Italia Nova*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, freco, ca. 1580-81; 1630's.

III.7a. Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace.

III.7b. Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace.

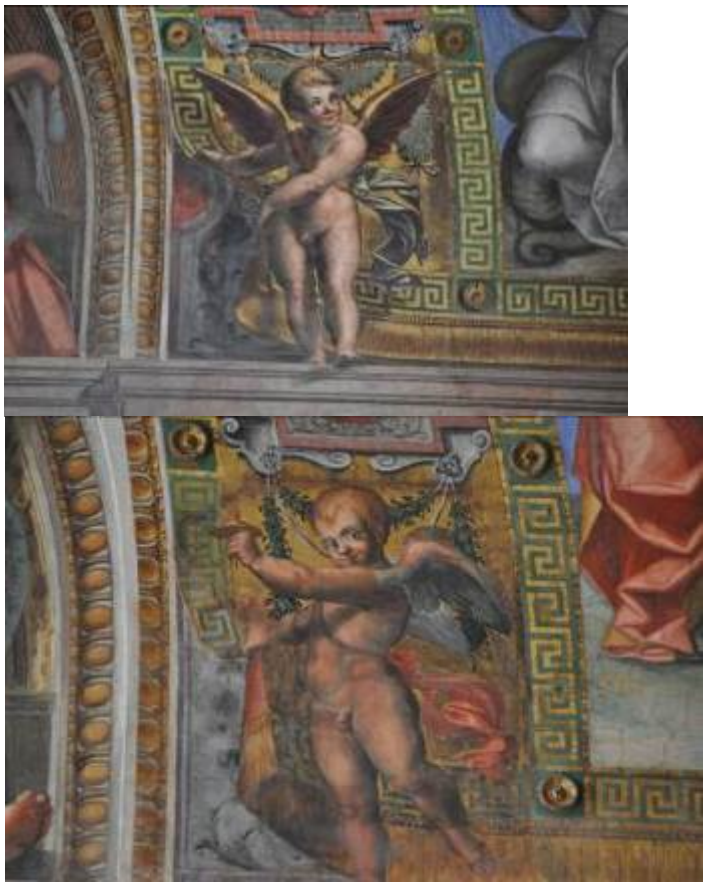
III.8. Giovanni Francesco Penni, *The Vision of the Cross*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1521.

III.9. Giulio Romano, *The Battle at the Milvian Bridge*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1521.

III.10. Giovanni Francesco Penni, *The Baptism of Constantine*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1524.

III.11. Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, *The Donation of Constantine*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1524.

III.12. Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism* and *The Explanation of the Donation of Constantine,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1582-1586.



III.13. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti,* Sala di Costantino- the vault, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1582-1585.

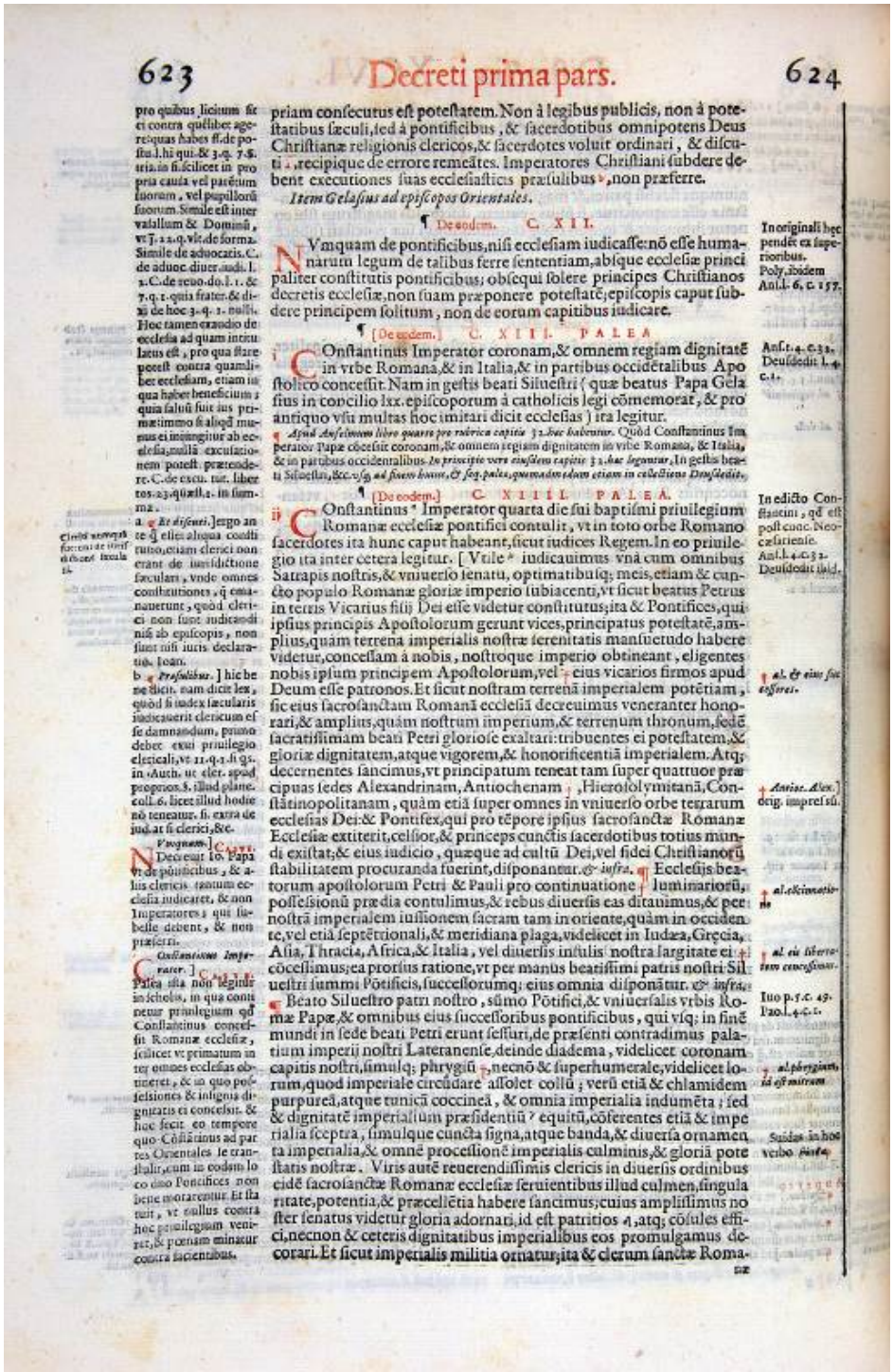
III.14. Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1585-1586.

III.15. Bartolomeo Passeroti, *Gregory XIII*, Gotha, oil on canvas, 1572-1575.

III.16. Bartolomeo Passerotti, *Gregory XIII*, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, 1572.

III.17. Domenico Tibaldi, *Gregory XIII*, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, engraving, 1572.

III.18. Cesare Nebbia, *The Donation of Countess Matilda*, Sala delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1581.



623 Decreti prima pars. 624

pro quibus licitum ſit ei contra quẽlibet agere quas habes ff. de poſtu. l. hi qui. & 3. q. 7. §. uria. in fi. ſcilicet in pro priꝫ cauſa vel parẽtum ſuorum, vel pupillorũ ſuorum. Simile eſt inter vaſallum & Dominũ, vt j. 22. q. vlt. de forma. Simile de aduocatis. C. de aduoc. diuer. iudi. l. 2. C. de reuo. do. l. 1. & 7. q. 1. quis frater. & dic de hoc 3. q. 2. nulli. Hoc tamen exordio de eccleſia ad quam inciuilatus eſt, pro qua ſtare poteſt contra quemlibet eccleſiam, etiam in qua habet beneficium; quia ſaluũ fuit ius primæ immo ſi aliqđ munus ei iniungitur ab eccleſia, nullã excuſationem poteſt prætendere. C. de excu. tut. liber tos. 23. quæſt. 2. in ſumma.

a ¶ *Et diſcuti.*] ergo ante ꝫ eſſet aliqua conditio, etiam clerici non erant de iuriſdictione ſæculari, vnde omnes conſtitutiones, ꝫ emanauerunt, quòd clerici non ſunt iudicandi niſi ab epiſcopis, non ſunt niſi iuris declaratio. Ioan.

b ¶ *Præſulibus.*] hic habe ne dicit. nam dicit lex, quòd ſi iudex ſæcularis iudicauerit clericum eſſe damnandum, primo debet exui priuilegio clericali, vt 11. q. 1. ſi qs. in Auth. ut cler. apud progenos. 8. illud plane. coll. 6. licet illud hodie nõ teneatur. ſi. extra de iud. at ſi clerici, &c.

Prognum.] CAPVT. Decreuit Io. Papa vt de põtificibus, & aliis clericis tantum eccleſia iudicaret, & non Imperatores: qui libelle debent, & non præſerri.

Conſtantinus Imperator.] CAPVT. Palea iſta non legitur in ſcholis, in qua continetur priuilegium qđ Conſtantinus conceſſit Romanæ eccleſiæ, ſcilicet vt primatum inter omnes eccleſias obtineret, & in quo poſſeſsiones & inſignia dignitatis ei conceſsit. & hoc fecit eo tempore quo Cõſtantinus ad partes Orientales le tranſtulit, cum in eodem loco duo Pontifices non bene morarentur. Et ſtatuit, vt nullus contra hoc priuilegium veniret, & pœnam minatur contra facientibus.

priam conſecutus eſt poteſtatem. Non à legibus publicis, non à poteſtatibus ſæculi, ſed à pontificibus, & ſacerdotibus omnipotens Deus Chriſtianæ religionis clericos, & ſacerdotes voluit ordinari, & diſcuti a, recipique de errore remẽdes. Imperatores Chriſtiani ſubdere debent executiones ſuas eccleſiaſticis præſulibus b, non præferre.

Item Gelaſius ad epiſcopos Orientales.

¶ De eodem. C. XII.

NVmquam de pontificibus, niſi eccleſiam iudicaſſe: nõ eſſe humanarum legum de talibus ferre ſententiam, abſque eccleſiæ principaliter conſtitutis pontificibus; obſequi ſolere principes Chriſtianos decretis eccleſiæ, non ſuam præponere poteſtatẽ; epiſcopis caput ſubdere principem ſolitum, non de eorum capitibus iudicare.

¶ [De eodem.] C. XIII. PALEA

i COnſtantinus Imperator coronam, & omnem regiam dignitatẽ in vrbe Romana, & in Italia, & in partibus occidẽtalibus Apoſtolico conceſſit. Nam in geſtis beati Silueſtri (quæ beatus Papa Gelaſius in concilio lxx. epiſcoporum à catholicis legi cõmemorat, & pro antiquo vſu multas hoc imitari dicit eccleſias) ita legitur.

¶ *Apud Anſelmum libro quarto pro rubrica capitis* 32. *hæc habentur.* Quòd Conſtantinus Imperator Papæ cõceſſit coronam, & omnem regiam dignitatem in vrbe Romana, & Italia, & in partibus occidentalibus. *In principio vero eiuſdem capitis* 32. *hæc leguntur.* In geſtis beati Silueſtri, &c. v/q *ad finem horæ, & ſeq. palea, quamvis eadem etiam in collectione Deuſdedit.*

¶ [De eodem.] C. XIIII. PALEA.

ii COnſtantinus * Imperator quarta die ſui baptiſmi priuilegium Romanæ eccleſiæ pontifici contulit, vt in toto orbe Romano ſacerdotes ita hunc caput habeant, ſicut iudices Regem. In eo priuilegio ita inter cætera legitur. [Vtile * iudicauimus vnà cum omnibus Satrapis noſtris, & vniuerſo ſenatu, optimatibuſq; meis, etiam & cuncto populo Romanæ gloriæ imperio ſubiacenti, vt ſicut beatus Petrus in terris Vicarius filij Dei eſſe videtur conſtitutus; ita & Pontifices, qui ipſius principis Apoſtolorum gerunt vices, principatus poteſtatẽ, amplius, quàm terrena imperialis noſtræ ſerenitatis manſuetudo habere videtur, conceſſam à nobis, noſtroque imperio obtineant, eligentes nobis ipſum principem Apoſtolorum, vel † eius vicarios firmos apud Deum eſſe patronos. Et ſicut noſtram terrenã imperialem potẽtiam, ſic eius ſacroſanctam Romanã eccleſiã decreuimus veneranter honorari, & amplius, quàm noſtrum imperium, & terrenum thronum, ſedẽ ſacratiſſimam beati Petri gloriosè exaltari: tribuentes ei poteſtatem, & gloriæ dignitatem, atque vigorem, & honorificentiã imperialem. Atq; decernentes ſancimus, vt principatum teneat tam ſuper quattuor præcipuas ſedes Alexandrinam, Antiochenam †, Hieroſolymitanã, Conſtãtinopolitanam, quàm etiã ſuper omnes in vniuerſo orbe terrarum eccleſias Dei: & Pontifex, qui pro tẽpore ipſius ſacroſanctæ Romanæ Eccleſiæ extiterit, celſior, & princeps cunctis ſacerdotibus totius mundi exiſtat, & eius iudicio, quæque ad cultũ Dei, vel fidei Chriſtianorũ ſtabilitatem procuranda fuerint, diſponantur. *& infra.* ¶ Eccleſijs beatorum apoſtolorum Petri & Pauli pro continuatione † luminariorũ, poſſeſsionũ prædia contulimus, & rebus diuerſis eas ditauimus, & per noſtrã imperialem iuſſionem ſacram tam in oriente, quàm in occidente, vel etiã ſeptẽtrionali, & meridiana plaga, videlicet in Iudæa, Græcia, Aſia, Thracia, Africa, & Italia, vel diuerſis inſulis noſtra largitate ei † cõceſſimus; ea prorſus ratione, vt per manus beatiſſimi patris noſtri Siluestri ſummi Põtificis, ſucceſſorumq; eius omnia diſponãtur. *& infra.*

¶ Beato Siluestro patri noſtro, ſũmo Põtifici, & vniuerſalis vrbis Romæ Papæ, & omnibus eius ſucceſſoribus pontificibus, qui vſq; in finẽ mundi in ſede beati Petri erunt ſeſſuri, de præſenti contradimus palatium imperij noſtri Lateranenſe, deinde diadema, videlicet coronam capitis noſtri, ſimulq; phrygiũ †, necnõ & ſuperhumerale, videlicet lorum, quod imperiale circũdare aſſolet collũ; verũ etiã & chlamidem purpureã, atque tunicã coccineã, & omnia imperialia indumẽta; ſed & dignitatẽ imperialium præſidentiũ ? equitũ, cõferentes etiã & imperialia ſceptra, ſimulque cuncta ſigna, atque banda, & diuerſa ornamenta imperialia, & omnẽ proceſſionẽ imperialis culminis, & gloriã potẽſtatis noſtræ. Viris autẽ reuerendiſſimis clericis in diuerſis ordinibus eidẽ ſacroſanctæ Romanæ eccleſiæ ſeruientibus illud culmen, ſingularitate, potentia, & præcellẽtia habere ſancimus, cuius ampliſſimus noſter ſenatus videtur gloria adornari, id eſt patritios a, atq; cõſules effici, necnon & ceteris dignitatibus imperialibus eos promulgamus decorari. Et ſicut imperialis militia ornatur; ita & clerum ſanctæ Roma-

In originali hæc pendẽt ex ſuperioribus. Poly. ibidem Anſ. l. 6. c. 157.

Anſ. l. 4. c. 32. Deuſdedit. l. 4. c. 1.

In edicto Conſtantini, qđ eſt poſt cunc. Neocæſarienſe. Anſ. l. 4. c. 32. Deuſdedit ibid.

† al. & eius ſuc ceſſores.

† Antioc. Alex.] deſig. impreſſi.

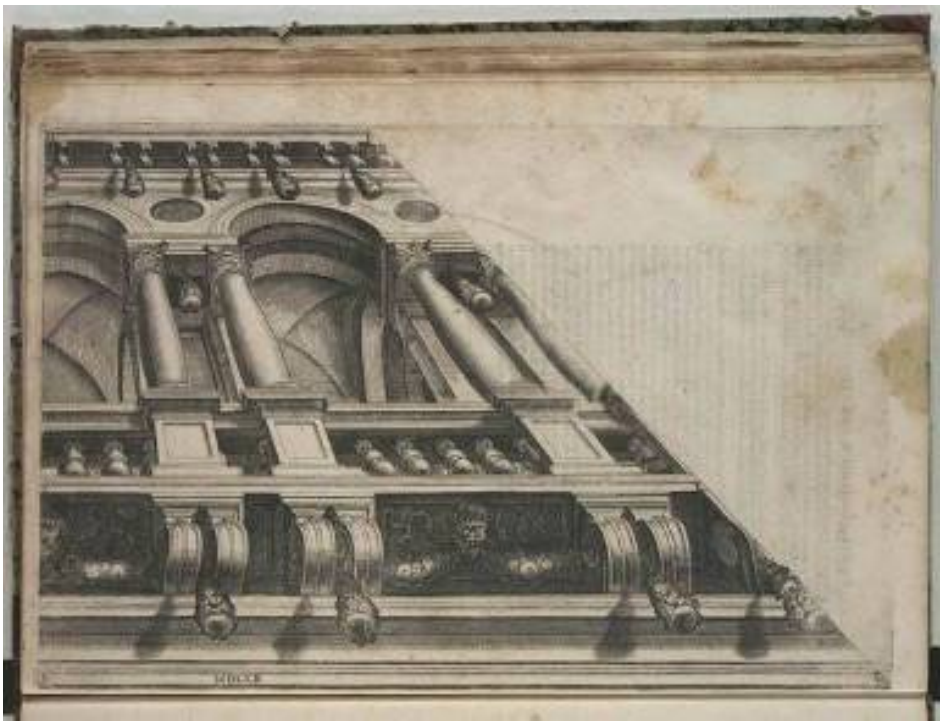
† al. ecclesiaſtico

† al. eũ libertatem conceſſimus.

Iuo p. 5. c. 49. Pan. l. 4. c. 1.

† al. phrygium, id eſt mitram

Suidas in hoc verbo ſtola.



III.20. Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola, *La due regole della prospettiva pratica*, Rome 1583
Laureti's method of painting illusionistic architectural backdrops on vaults (quadratura).

III.21. Sala Regia, the Vatican Palace.

III.22a. Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, *The Donation of Constantine*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1524, detail.

III.22b. Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, *The Donation of Constantine*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1524, detail.

III.23. *The Donation of Constantine*, Chapel of St. Sylvester, Monastery of SS. Quattro Coronati, fresco, ca. 1250.

III.24. Livio Agresti, *The Donation of Peter of Aragon*, Sala Regia, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1564.

III.25. Orazio Samacchini, *The Donation of Otto I*, Sala Regia, the Vatican Palace, fresco, 1563-1564.

III.26. Raphael and workshop, *Loggia Farnesina*, Villa Farnesina, Rome, fresco, ca. 1515.

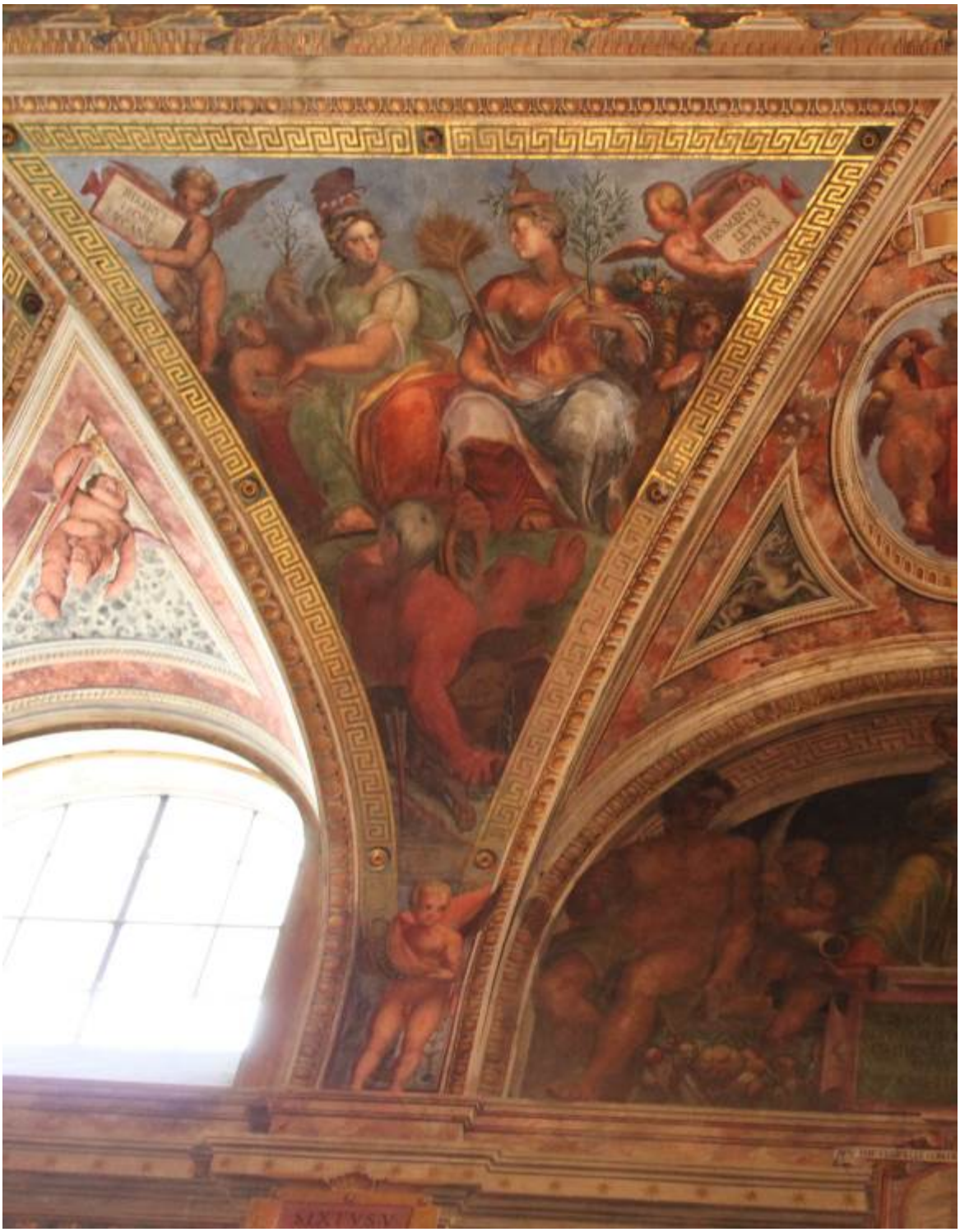
III.27. *Italia Antiqua*, Galleria delle Carte Geografiche, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1580-1581; 1630's, detail.

III.28. Tommaso Laureti, *Cyrniorum (Corsica),* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.29. Tommaso Laureti, *Sicilia*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.30. Tommaso Laureti, *Liguria and Hetrusca*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.31. Tommaso Laureti, *Latium and Campanus,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.



III.32. Tommaso Laureti, *Lucania and Apulia*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.33. Tommaso Laureti, *Picenum and Veneti*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.34. Tommaso Laureti, *Asia*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

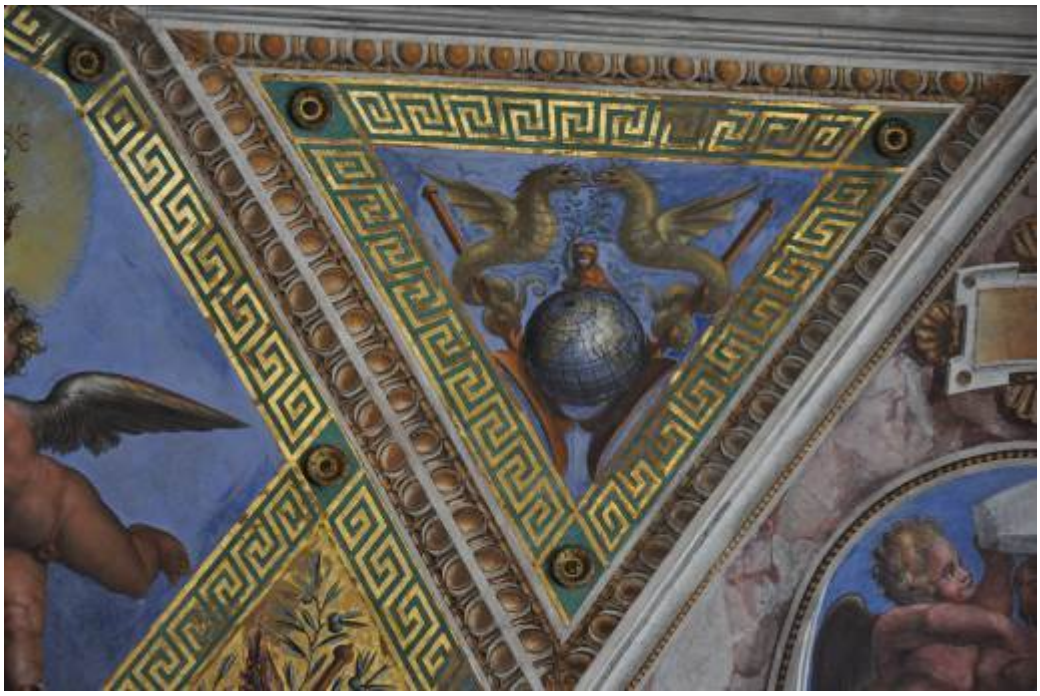
III.35. Tommaso Laureti, *Europa,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.36. Tommaso Laureti, *Africa,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.37. Tommaso Laureti, *Coat-of-arms of Sixtus V,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.38. Tommaso Laureti, *Prudence,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.39. Tommaso Laureti, *Justice,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.



III.40. Tommaso Laureti, *Fortitude,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca.1582-1585.

III.41. Tommaso Laureti, *Temperance*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.43. Tommaso Laureti, *Vigilance and Wisdom,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.44. Tommaso Laureti, *Benignity and Clemency,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.45. Tommaso Laureti, *Liberality and Magnificence*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.46. Tommaso Laureti, *Sincerity and Harmony*, Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.47. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti with the Crown and the Sword,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.48a. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.48b. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

III.48c. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

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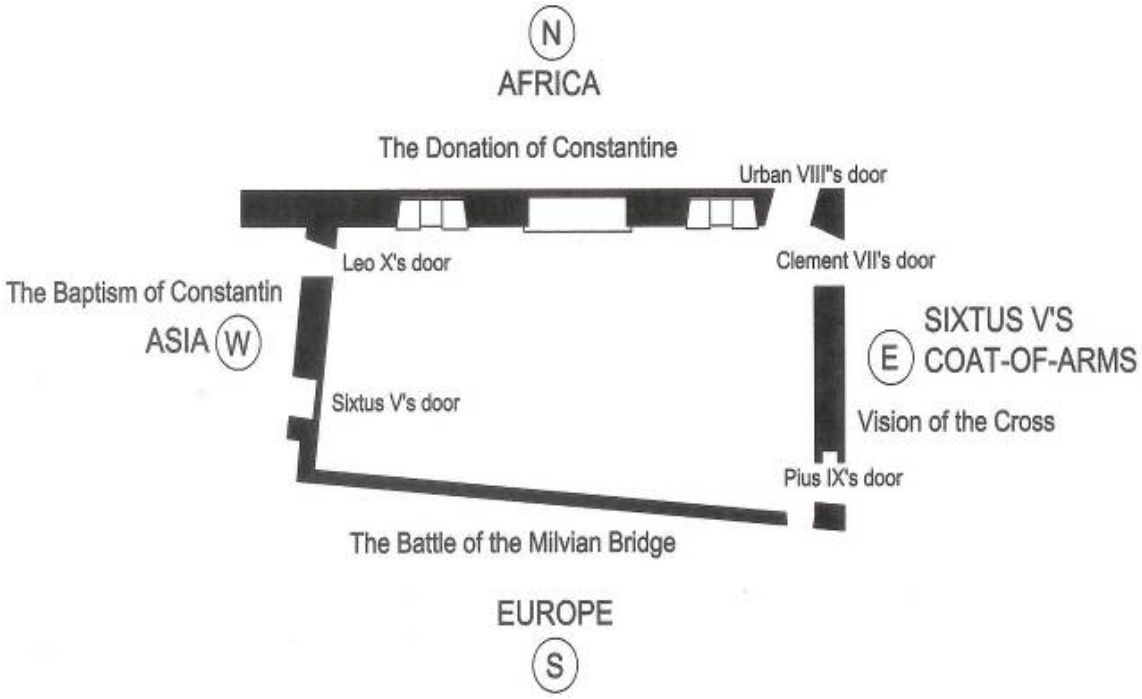
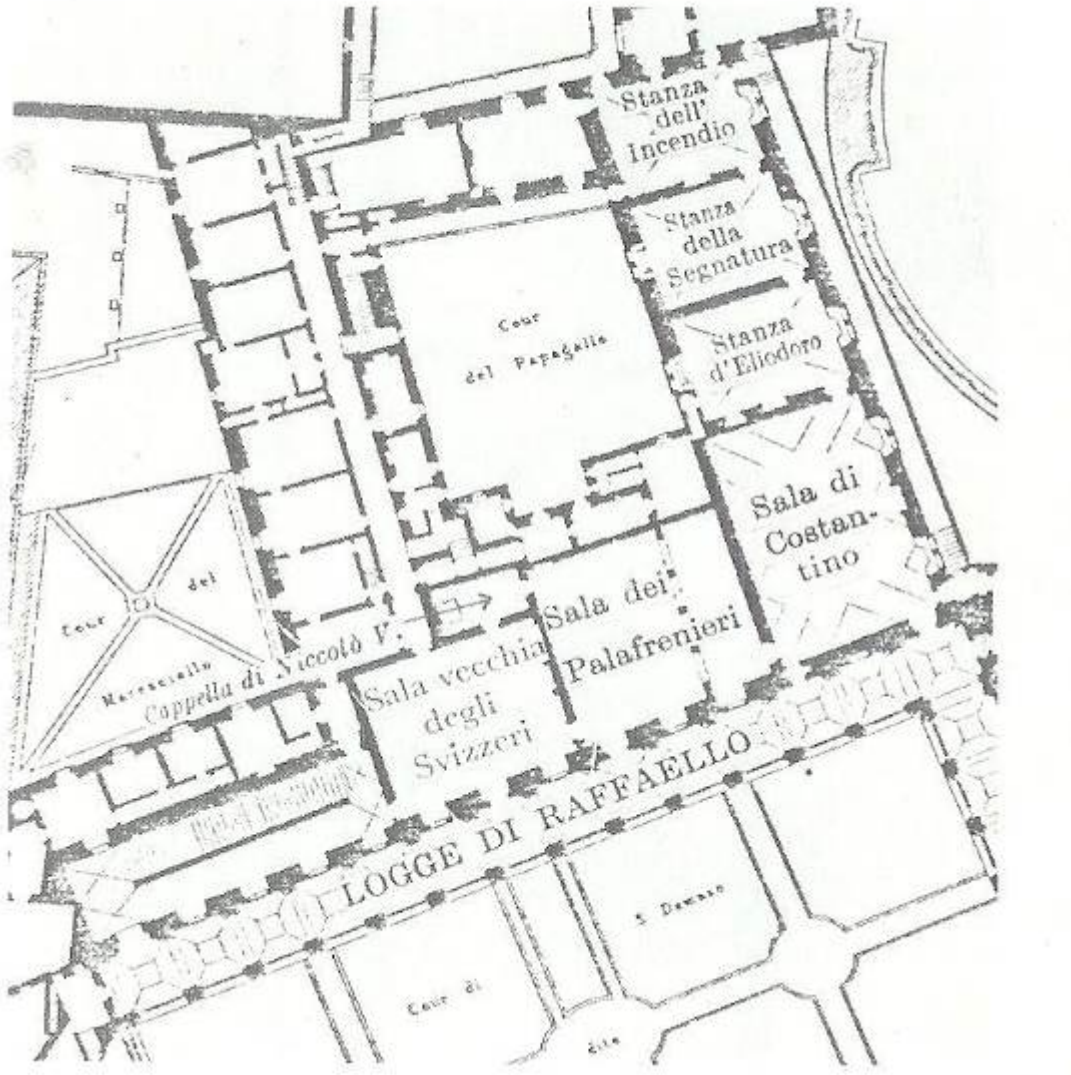
III.48d. Tommaso Laureti, *Putti,* Sala di Costantino, the Vatican Palace, fresco, ca. 1582-1585.

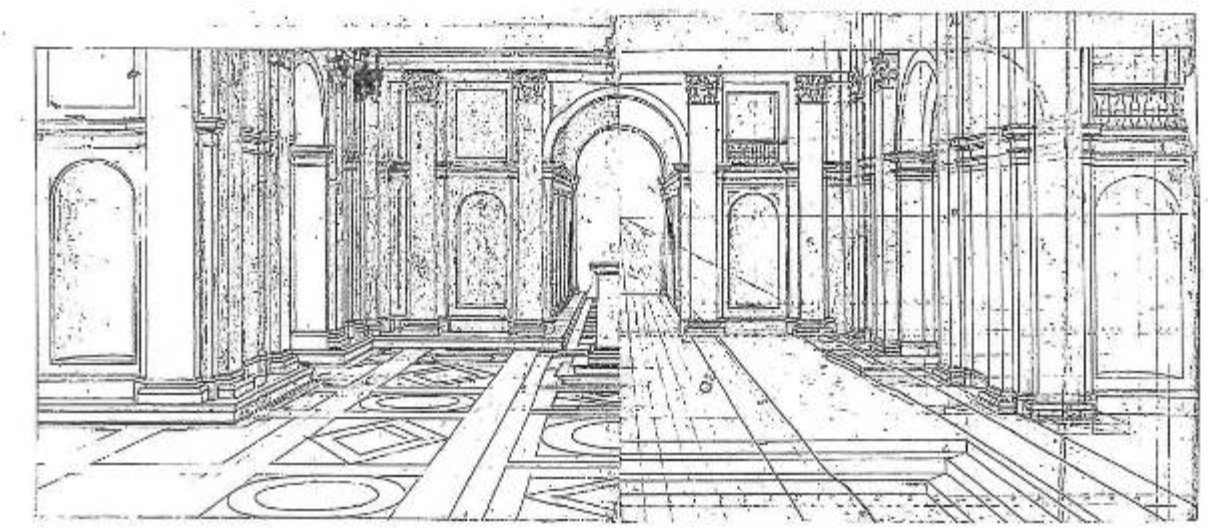
III.49. Sala di Costantino, to the right: South door.



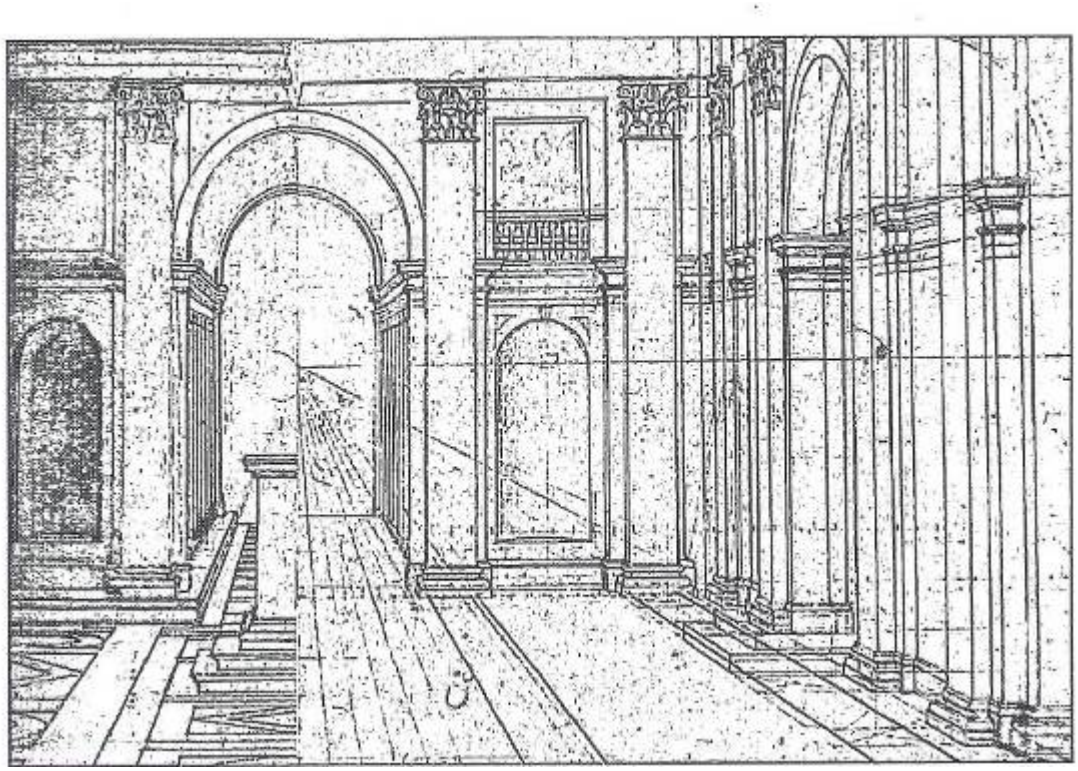
III.50. Sala di Costantino, plan view.



III.51. The Vatican Palace, partial plan view, 1882.

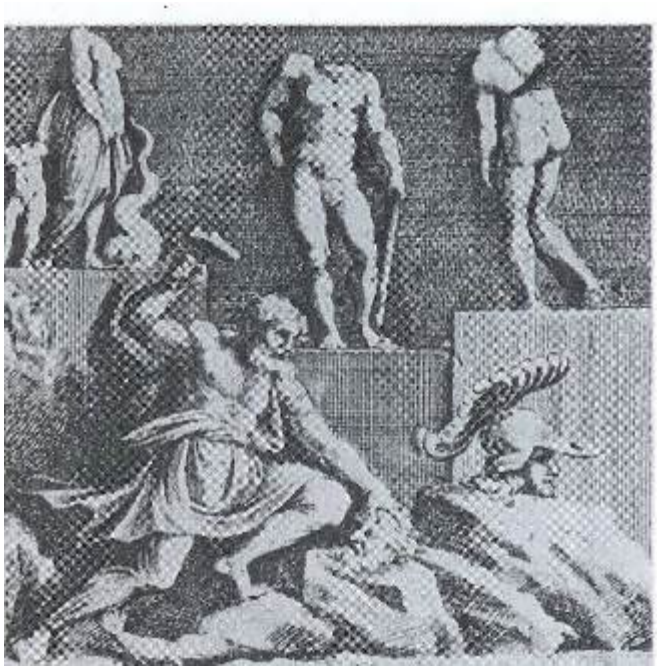


IV.1a. Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, drawing, 1580's, Nationalmuseum Stockholm.



IV.1b. Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, drawing, 1580's, Nationalmuseum Stockholm.

IV.2. Tommaso Laureti, *The Triumph of Christianity over Paganism*, detail.



IV.3. Pietro Santi Bartoli, engraving after the *Destruction of Idols*, Sala di Costantino, Pl. 7a, 1680.

IV. 4. Principio Fabrizi, *Delle allusioni, impresse, et emblemi*, p. 275, detail, Roma, 1588.

IV. 5. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

IV.6. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

IV.7. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

IV.8. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

IV.9. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

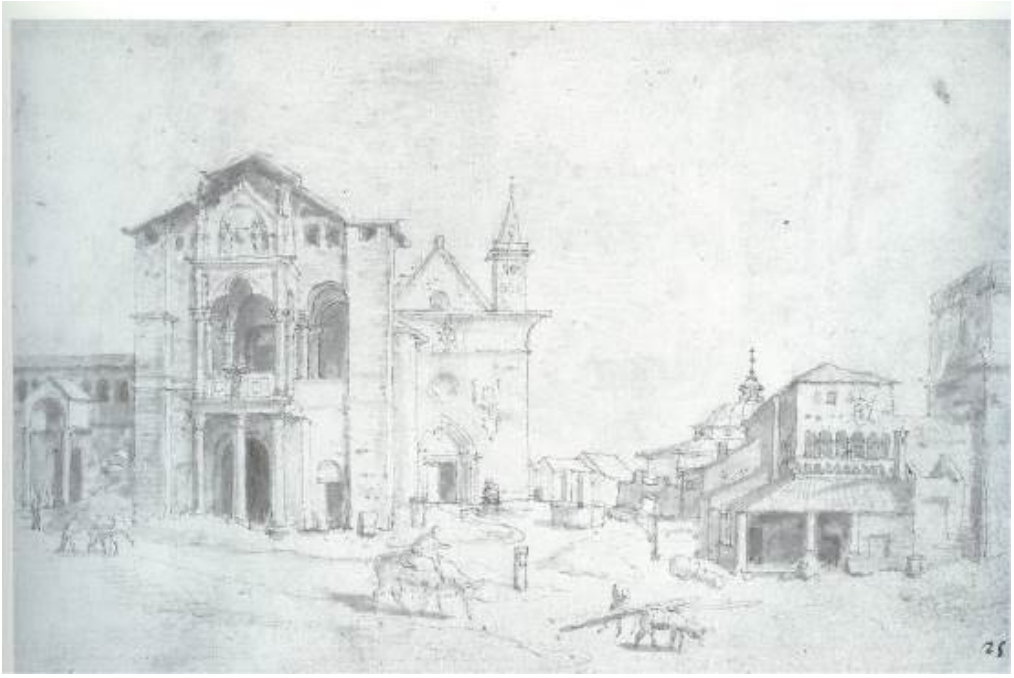
IV.10. Sala di Costantino, detail, Vatican Palace.

IV.11. Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace.

IV.12a. Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace.

IV.12b. Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace.

IV.12c. Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace.



IV.13a. Marten van Heemskerck, *Campus Lateranensis*, 1530s.

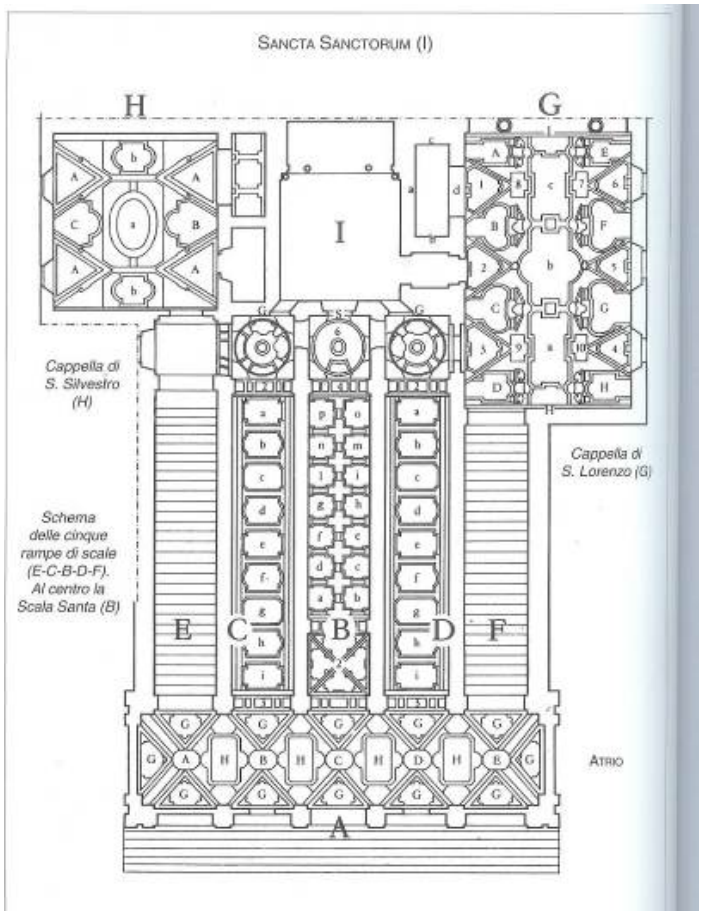
IV.13b. Antonio Lafréry, *Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, 1575, engraving.

IV.13c. The Lateran prior to the Sistine intervention, Biblioteca Vaticana, the Vatican.

IV.14. The Lateran after the Sistine intervention, Biblioteca Vaticana, the Vatican.

IV.15. *Sixti V Pont. Max. Numismata* (detail), in Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Vitae et gesta summorum Pontificum*, 1630, Rome.

IV.16. *Sixti V Pont. Max. Numismata* (detail), in Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Vitae et gesta summorum Pontificum*, 1630, Rome.



IV.17. Scala Santa, plan (Form Mario Cempanari and Tito Amodei, *Scala Santa and Sancta Sanctorum*, Roma, 1999).

IV.18. Cherubino and Giovanni Alberti (and others), Chapel of St. Sylvester, *Vault*, Scala Santa, fresco, 1589.

IV.19. Domenico Fontana, Palazzo Laterano, 1585-1589, west facade, Rome.

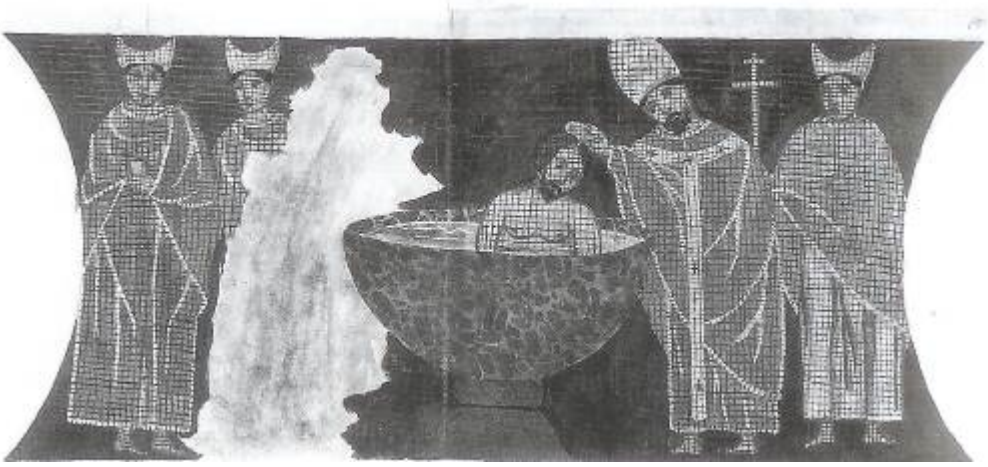
IV.19a. Domenico Fontana, Palazzo Laterano, 1585-1589, west facade, detail, Rome.

IV.20. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *Sixtus V and the Newly Discovered Coins at the Lateran*, Salone degli Imperatori, Lateran Palace, Rome.

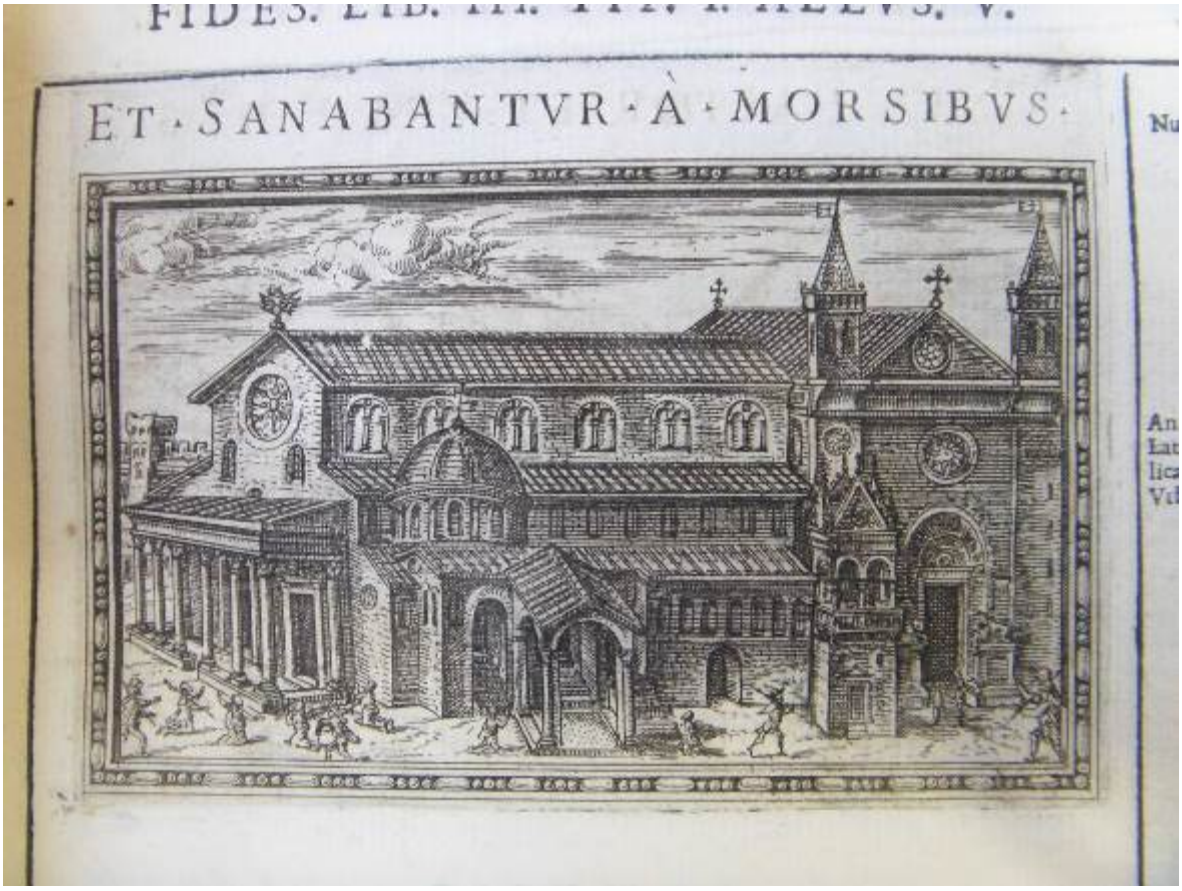
IV.21. Salone dei Papi, south wall, Lateran Palace, Rome.

IV.21a. Salone dei Papi, north wall, detail, Lateran Palace, Rome.

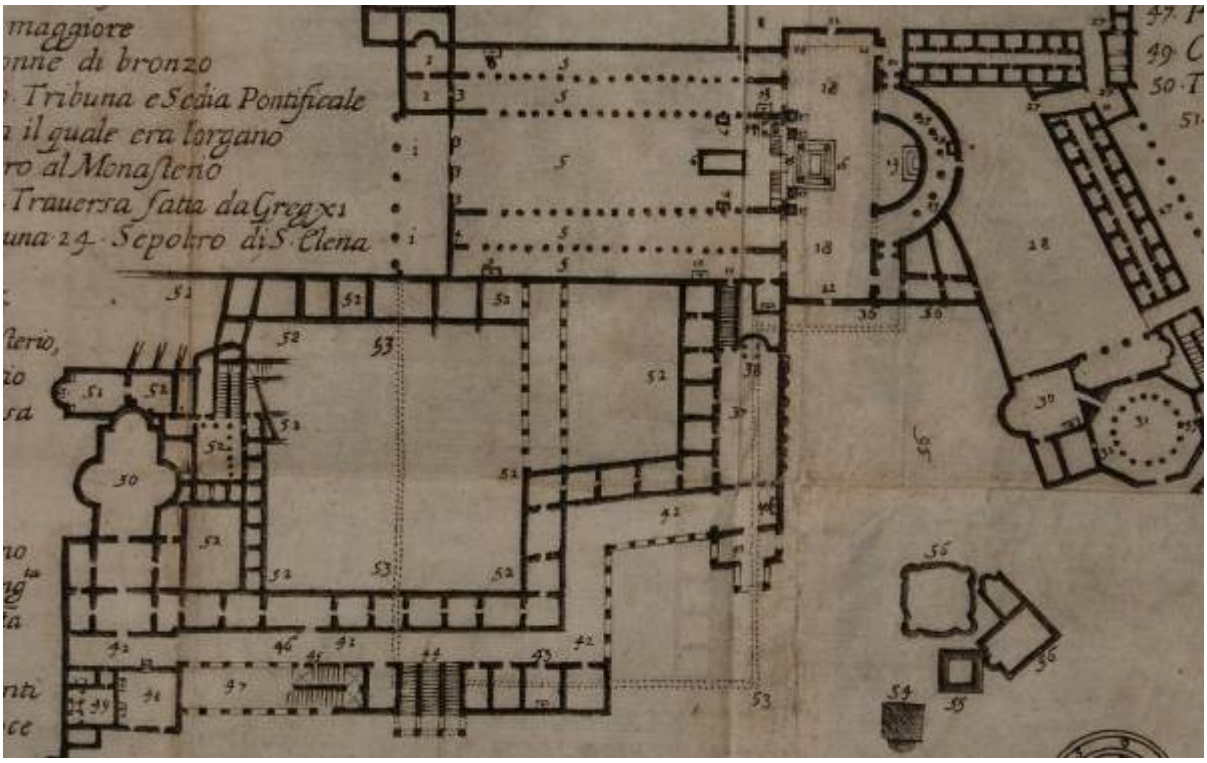
IV.22. *The Donation of Constantine*, Barb. Lat. 4423.



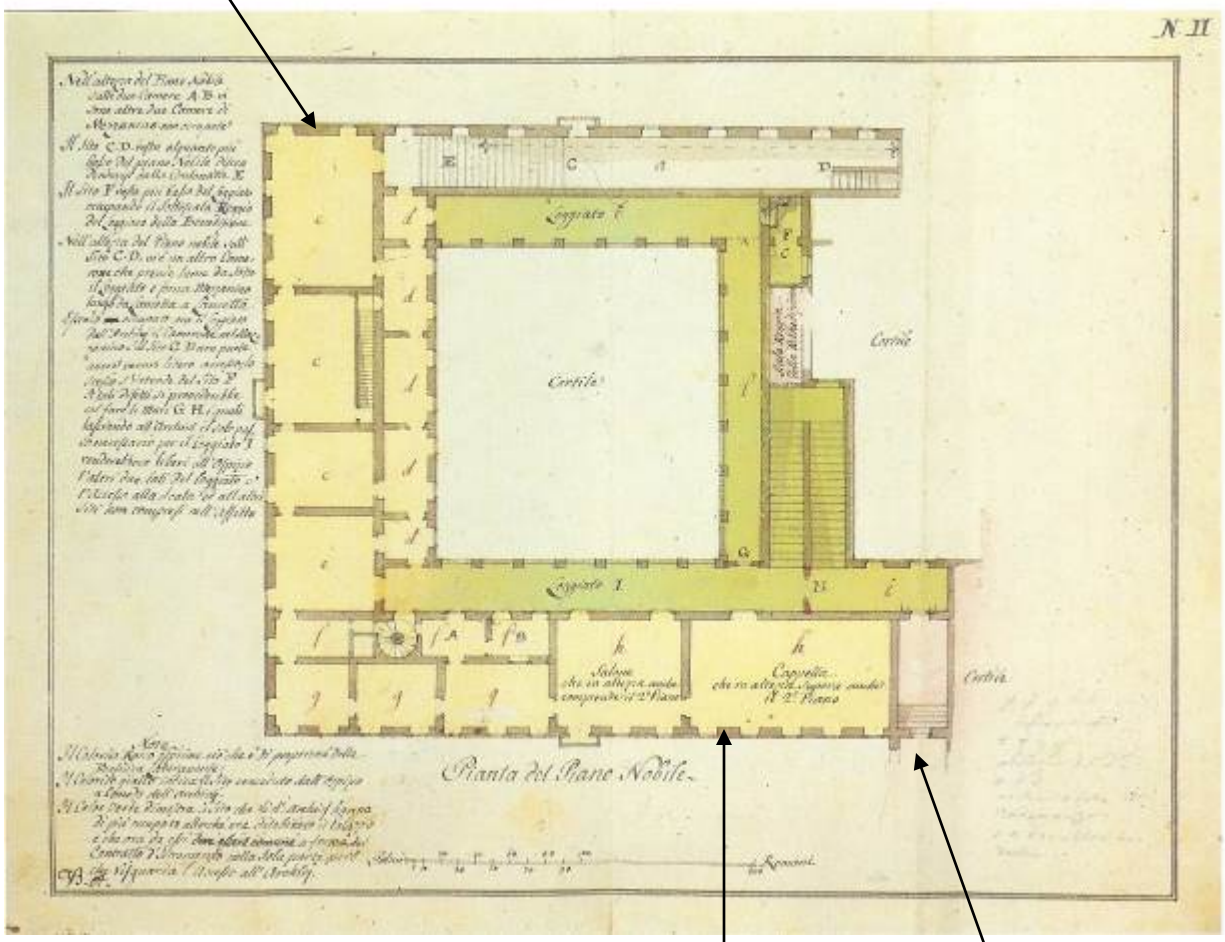
IV.23. *The Baptism of Constantine*, Barb. Lat. 4423.



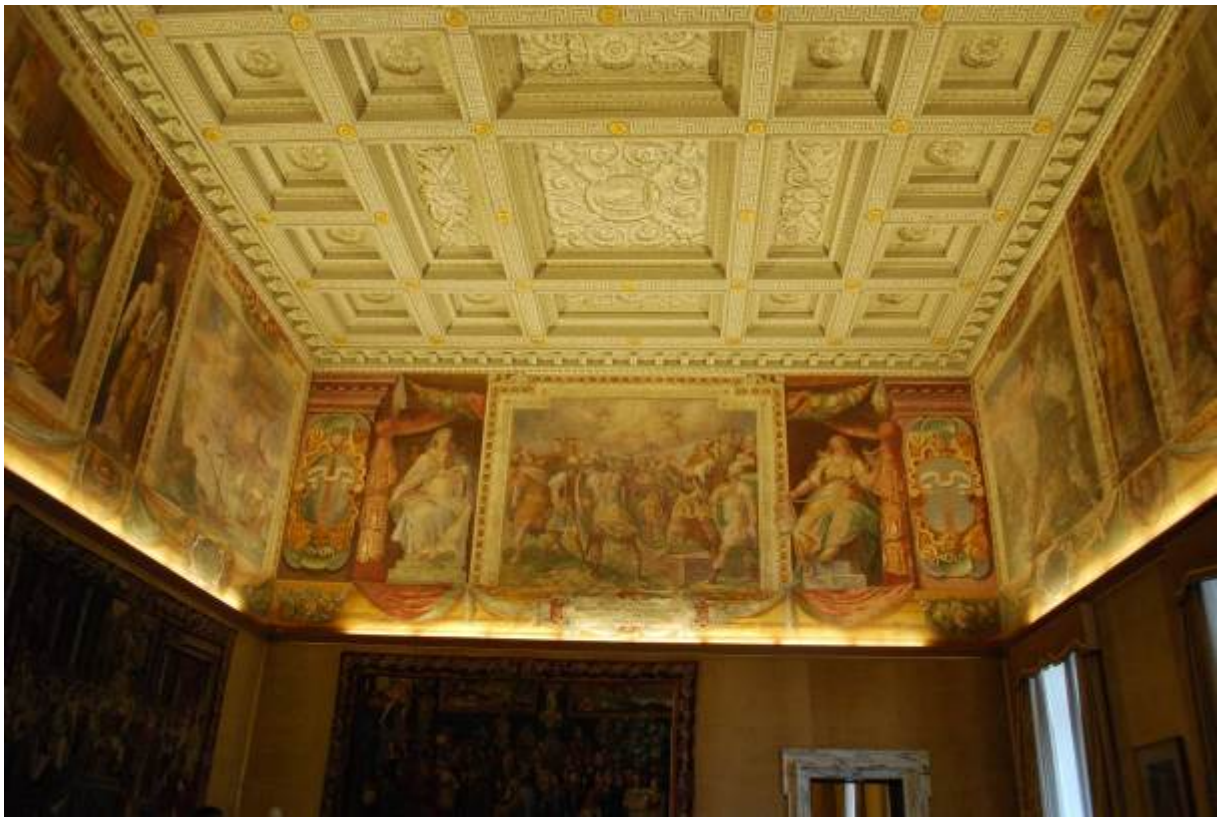
IV.24a. *The Lateran Basilica*, in Principio Fabrizi, *Delle allusioni, impresse, et emblemi*, Roma, 1588.



IV.24b. Plan of the Old Lateran Palace, detail, in Giovanni Severano, *Le Sette Chiese di Roma*, Roma, 1630.



IV.25. Palazzo Laterano, plan of the piano nobile, 18th century, Archivio di Stato di Roma, Buon Governo, b.128).



IV.26. Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.

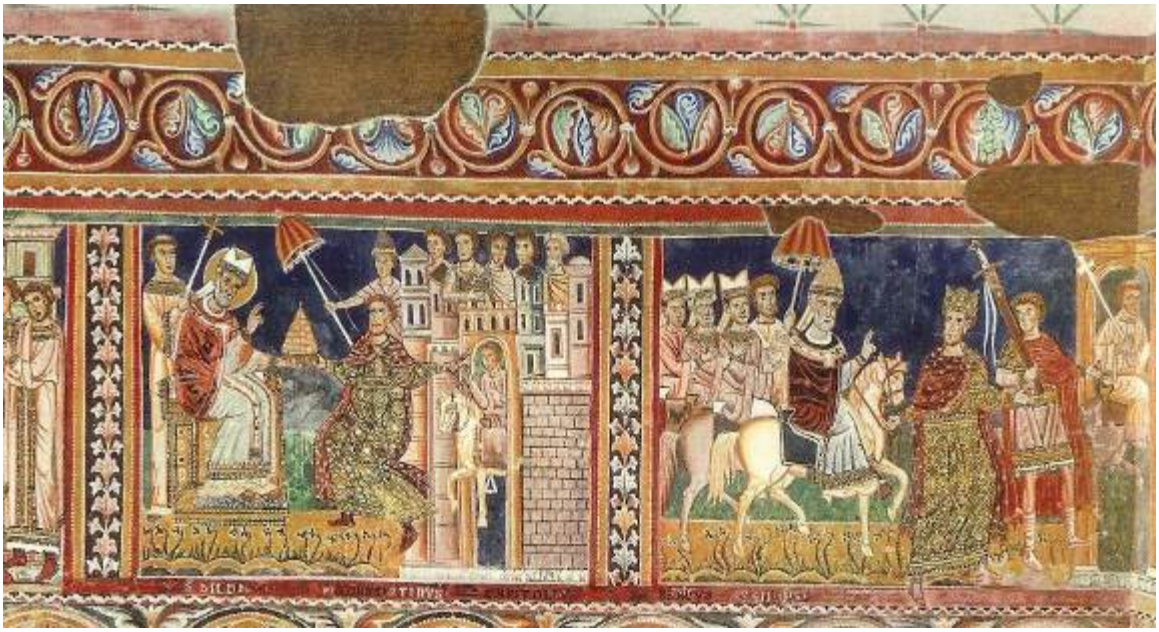
IV.27. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *Possesso of Pope Sylvester I,* Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.

IV.28. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Baptism of Constantine*, Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.

IV.29. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Donation of Constantine*, Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.

IV.29a. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Donation of Constantine*, Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.

IV.30. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *Vision of the Cross*, Salone di Costantino, Lateran Palace, Rome.



IV.31. Chapel of St. Sylvester in the Monastery of SS. Quattro Coronati, detail, Rome.

IV.32. The Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

IV.33. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Vision of the Cross* and the *Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, the Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

IV.34. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Vision of SS. Peter and Paul* and the *Recognition of the Apostles' Portraits by Constantine*, the Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

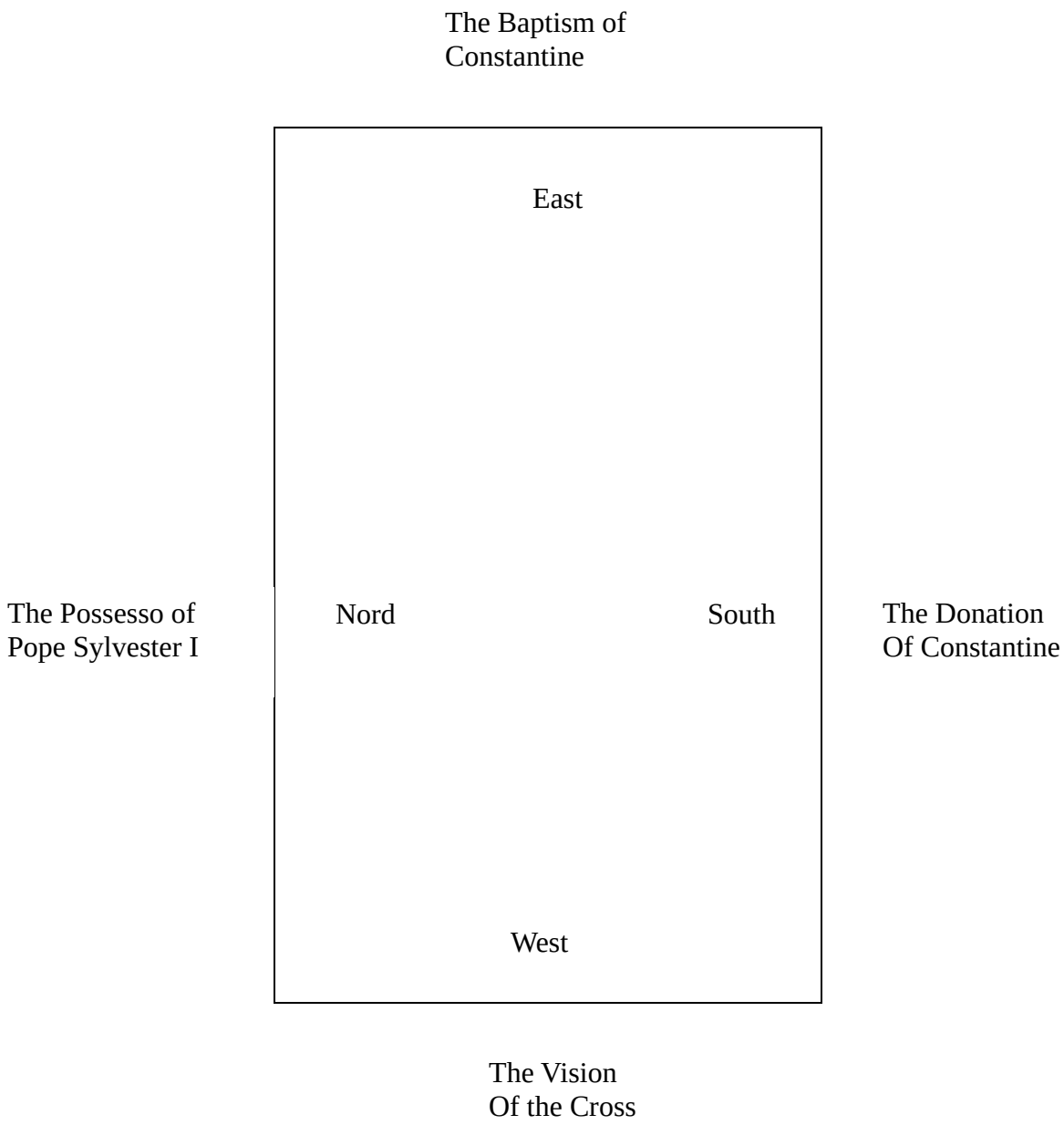
IV.35. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Donation of Constantine*, the Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

IV.36. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Baptism of Constantine*, the Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

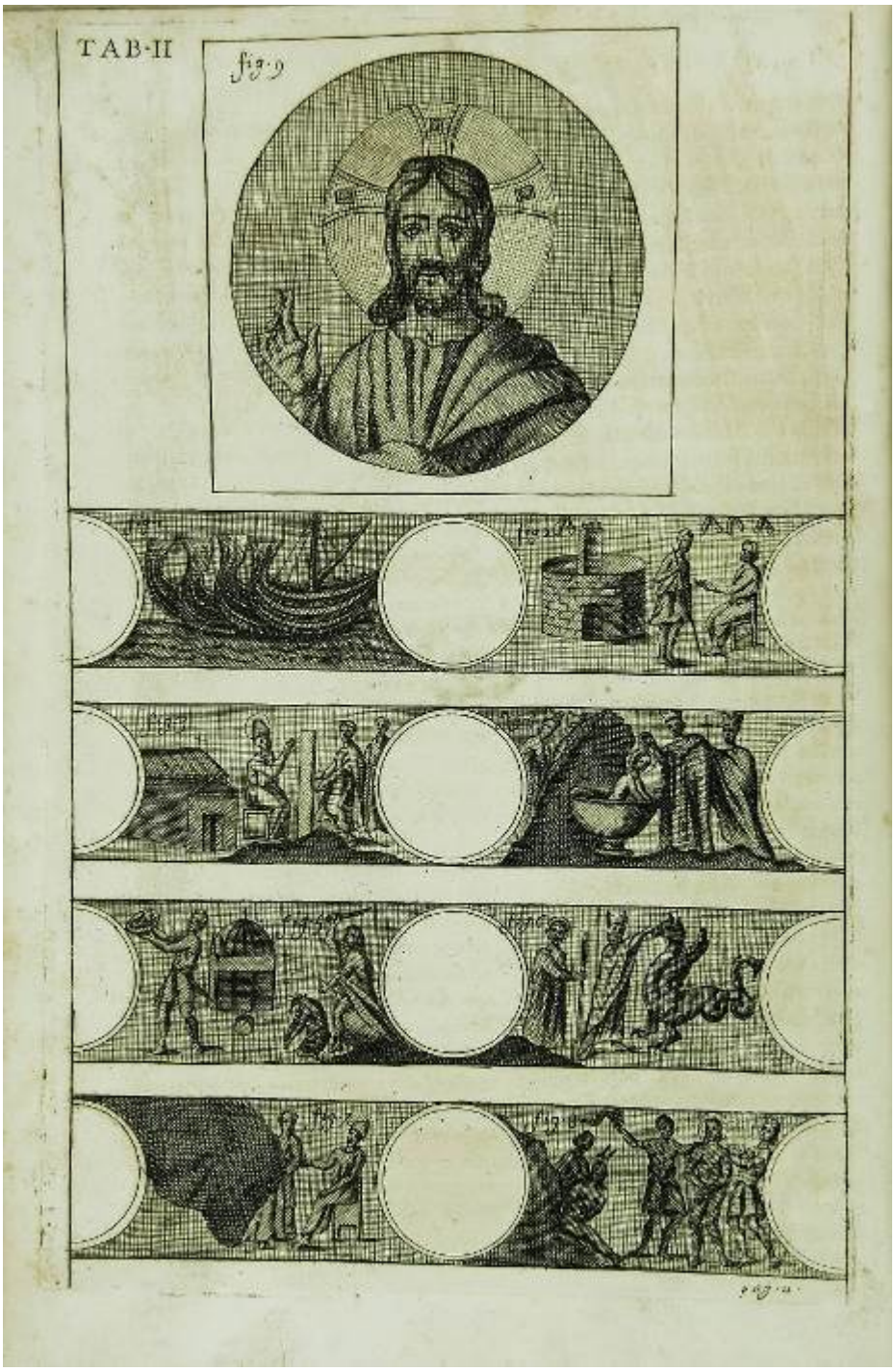
IV.37. Cesare Nebbia (and others), *The Posses so of Pope Sylvester*, the Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

IV.38. *Pope Sylvester Blessing*, The Benediction Loggia, the Lateran.

IV.39. Cesaria Nebbia, *The Donation of Constantine*, drawing, 1587-9, Prado, Madrid.



IV.40. Salone di Costantino, layout, Palazzo Laterano, Rome.



IV.41. Giovanni Ciampini, *De Sacris Aedificiis a Constantino Magno Constructis*, Tab. II, Roma, 1693.

IV.42. Nebbia drawing Matilda; 4th quarter of the 16th century, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, Paris. (INV 11579, recto).

IV.43. Giovanni de Rossi, Plan of Rome (detail with the Villa Montalto above Santa Maria Maggiore), 1668.

IV.44. San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, view toward the south wall, Rome.

IV.45. San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, detail, Rome.

IV.46. San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, detail, west wall, Rome.

IV.47. Bernardino Cesari, *The Triumph of Constantine*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, Rome.

IV.48. Cesare Nebbia, *Constantine's Dream of SS. Peter and Paul*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, Rome.

IV.49. Paris Nogari, *Pope Sylvester on Mount Sorrate*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, Rome.

IV.50. Cristoforo Roncalli, *The Baptism of Constantine*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, Rome.

IV.51. Paris Nogari, *The Foundation of the Lateran Basilica*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.52. Giovanni Battista Ricci, *The Consecration of the High Altar of the Lateran Basilica*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.53. Paris Nogari, *The Apparition of Christ at the Lateran*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.54. Giovanni Baglione, *The Donation to the Lateran Basilica*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.55a. Giovanni Baglione, *The Donation to the Lateran Basilica*, detail, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.55b. Giovanni Baglione, *The Donation to the Lateran Basilica*, detail, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, west wall, Rome.

IV.56. Giovanni Baglione, *The Donation to the Lateran Basilica*, drawing, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

IV.57. Giovanni Baglione, *The Donation to the Lateran Basilica*, drawing, Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'archéologie.

IV.58. Bernardino Cesari, *The Triumph of Constantine*, San Giovanni in Laterano, the transept, east wall, Rome.

IV.59. Cavaliere d'Arpino (attributed), *Clement VIII*, Senigallia, Museo Diocesano.

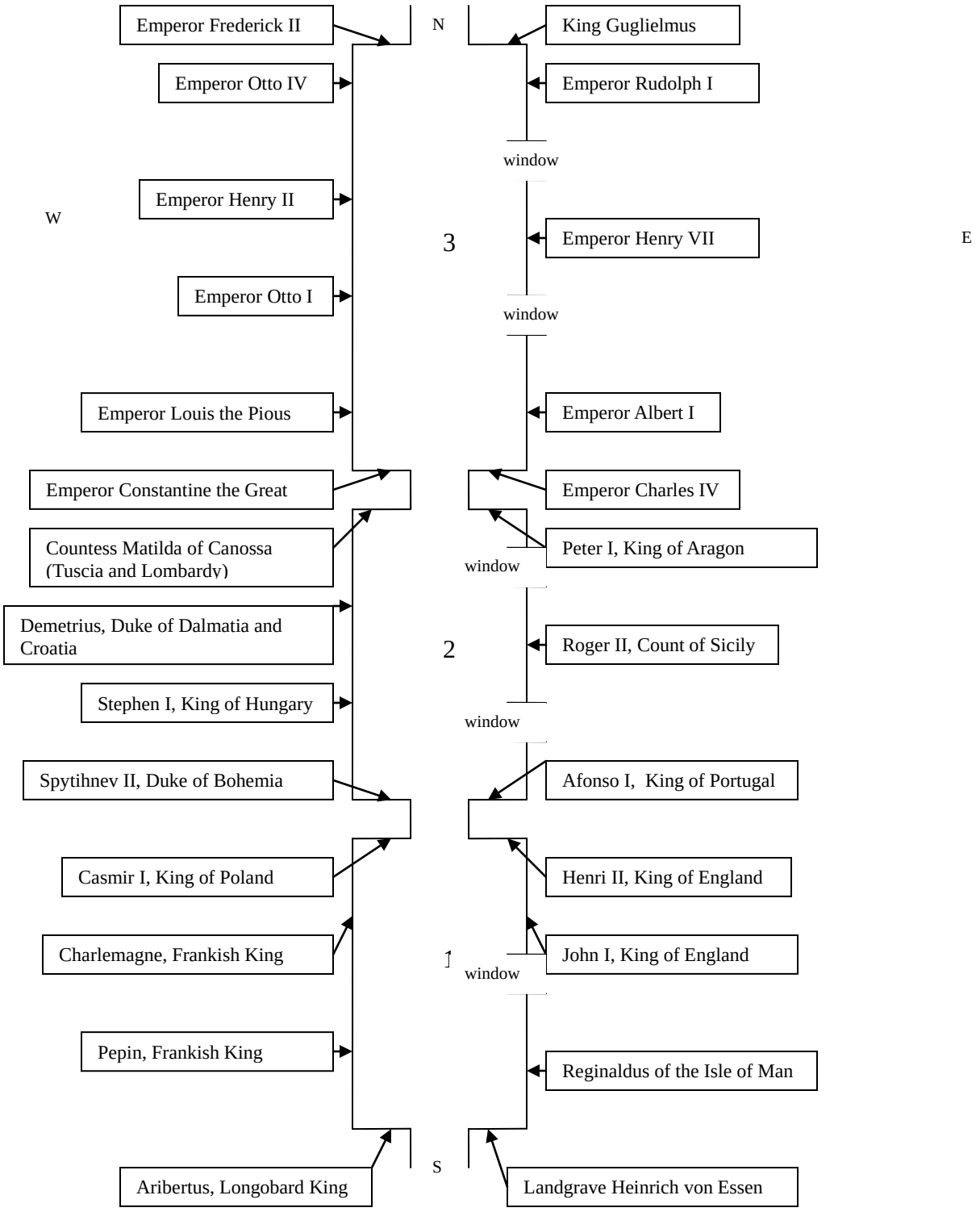
IV.60. Cherubino and Giovanni Alberti (and workshop), vault, San Silvestro al Quirinale, Rome.

IV.61. Cherubino and Giovanni Alberti (and workshop), vault, detail, San Silvestro al Quirinale, Rome.

IV.62. San Silvestro al Quirinale, vault, detail Rome.

V.1a. Giovanni Battista Ricci and others, *Paul V as a library patron*, Sale Paoline, 1611-1612, the Vatican.

V.1b. Giovanni Battista Ricci and others, *Constantine the Great as a library patron*, Sale Paoline, 1611-1612, the Vatican.



V.2. Layout of the Archivum.

V.3. *Bust of Paul V* above the entrance to the Archivum, Salone Sistino, Vatican Palace.

V.4. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, first room, south wall.

V.5. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, first room, west wall.

V.6. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, first room, north wall.

V.7. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, first room, east wall.

V.8. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, second room, south wall.

V.9. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, second room, west wall.

V.10. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, second room, north wall.

V.11. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, second room, east wall.

V.12. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room.

V.13. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, south wall.

V.14. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, west wall.

V.15. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, north wall.

V.16a. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, east wall, details with the three episodes.

V.16b. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, east wall, details with the three episodes.

V.16c. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, east wall, details with the three episodes.

V.17. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, south wall, detail with the medallion of Innocent X.

V.18. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, north wall, detail with the medallion of Alexander VII.

V.19. Inscription marking the eighth year of Paul V's pontificate (1612-1613), Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, ceiling, detail.

V.20. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, first room, ceiling.

V.21. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, second room, ceiling.

V.22. Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, ceiling.

V.23. *The Confirmation of the Donation by Charlemagne*, Archvium Secretum Vaticanum, first room, west wall.

V.24. *The Donation of Countess Matilda of Canossa*, Archvium Secretum Vaticanum, second room, north wall.

V.25. *The Donation of Constantine the Great*, Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, south wall.

V.26. *The Donation of Constantine the Great*, Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, south wall, detail.

V.27. *The Donation of Otto I*, Archivum Secretum Vaticanum, third room, west wall.

V.28. Nicolas Cordier, *Henry IV*, 1608, San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome.

V.29. Bernini, Scala Regia, North corridor Vatican Palace, 1660-1666.

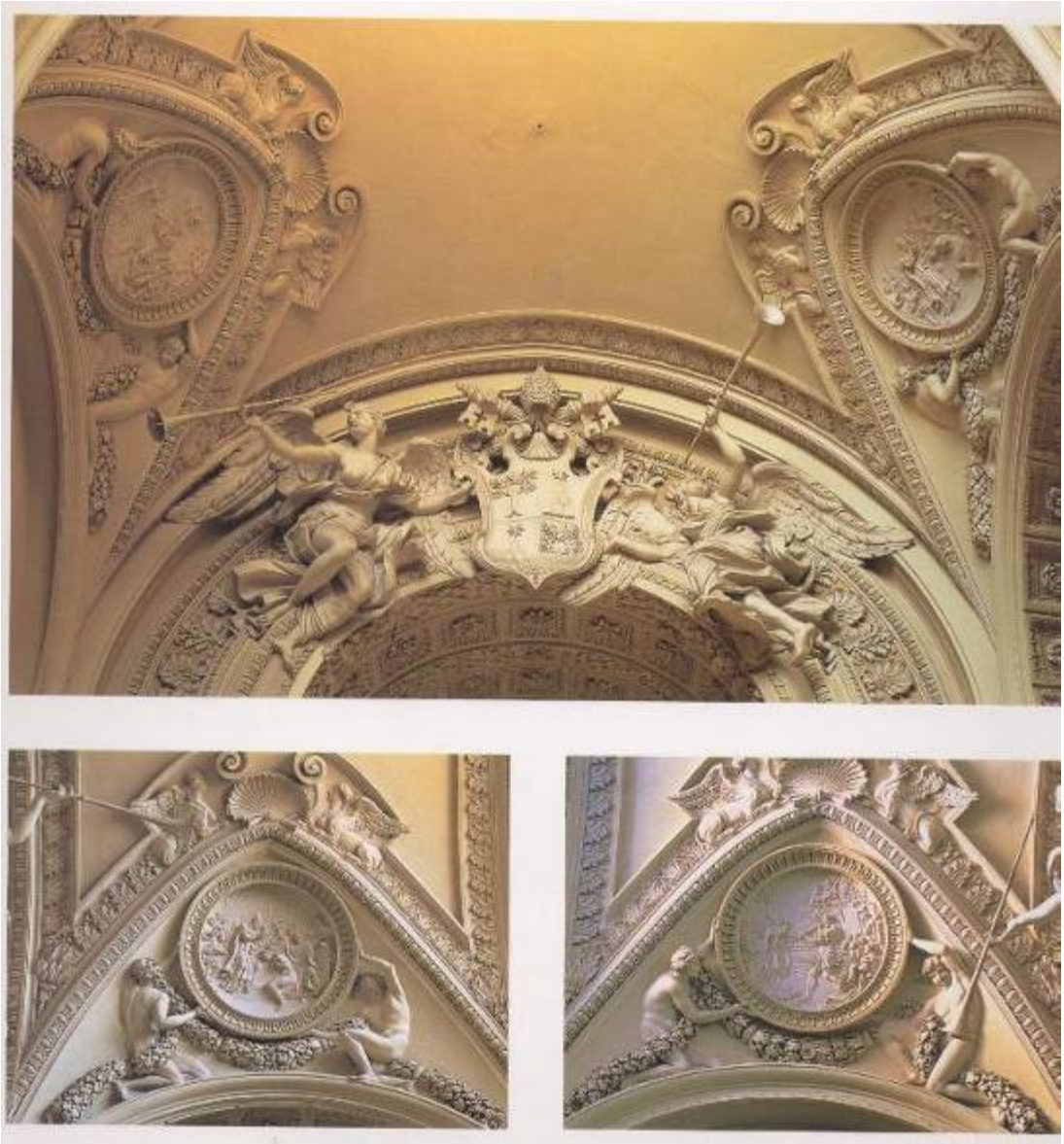
V.30a. Bernini, Scala Regia and the *Constantine*, Vatican Palace.

V.30b. Bernini, Scala Regia and the *Constantine*, Vatican Palace.

V.31. Bernini, *Constantine,* 1654-1670, the Vatican.

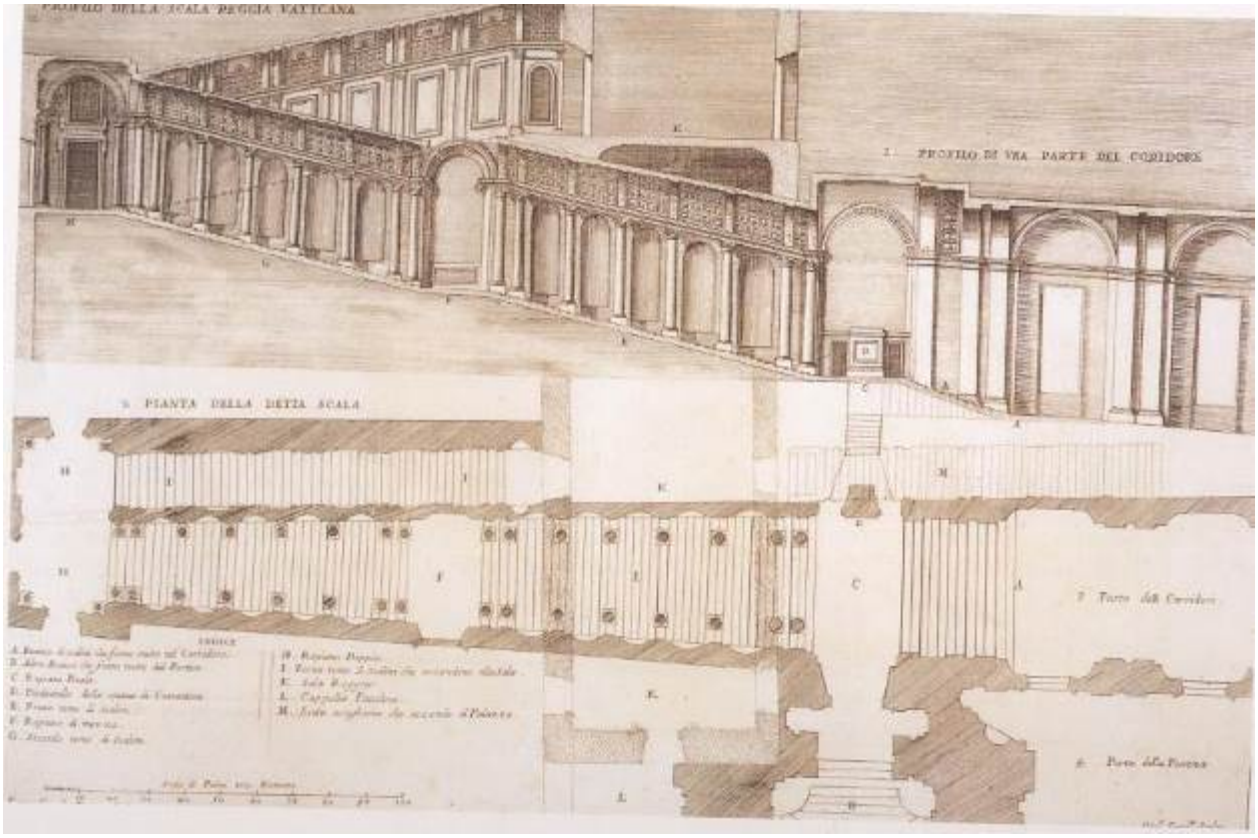
V.32. St. Peter’s, narthex with the *Constantine* in the background.

V.33. Bernini, *Constantine*, 1654-1670, the Vatican.



V.34. Bernini, *Constantine*, 1654-1670, the Vatican. Left: Medallion with the *Baptism of Constantine*; Right: Medallion with *Constantine Founding St. Peter's*.

V.35. Agostino Cornacchini, *Charlemagne*, 1725, St. Peter's.



V.36. Carlo Fontana, Reproduction of the Scala Regia plan, *Il Tempio Vaticano*, 1694.

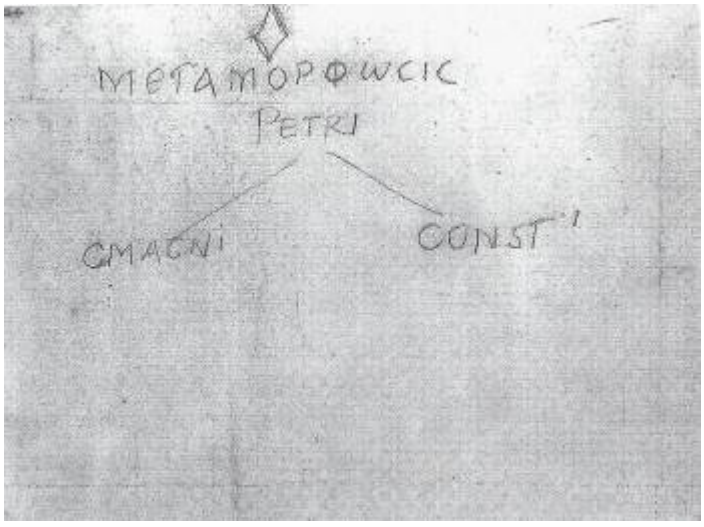
V.37. Francesco Aquila, *Statua equestre di Costantino il Grande. Opera di Cav. Bernini*, in *Raccolta di statue antiche e moderne*, Roma, 1704.

V.38. Francesco Panini, *Prospectus Scalae Regiae*, 18th century.

V.39a. Taddeo Zuccari, *The Confirmation of the Donation by Charlemagne*, Sala Regia, ca. 1562, the Vatican.


b.

V.39b. Taddeo Zuccari, *The Confirmation of the Donation by Charlemagne*, Sala Regia, ca. 1562, the Vatican.



V.40. *Drawing*, BAV, Chigi a. I. 19, fol. 40v.

V.41. Bernini, *Pasce oves mea*, 1633-1646, St. Peter's, narthex.

V.42. Ambrogio Bonvicino, *Christ giving the keys to St. Peter,* ca. 1612, St. Peter's, facade.

V.43. *Constantine's Vision of SS Peter and Paul*, ca. 1612, St. Peter's, narthex.

V.44. Entrance to the Vatican Palace, the Vatican.

V.45. Girolamo da Sermoneta, *The Donation of Pepin*, Sala Regia, ca. 1562, the Vatican.

V.46. *The Constantine Cabinet*, 1663-1668, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.

V.47. *The Constantine Cabinet*, detail with the *Donation of Constantine*, 1663-1668, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.

VI.1. Rubens, *The Double Marriage of Constantine and Licinius*, oil sketch, 1622, M.W. Leatham, Finchampstead.

VI.2. Rubens, *The Monogram*, oil sketch, 1622, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.3. Rubens, *The Labarum*, oil sketch, 1622, H. E. M. Benn, Haslemere.

VI.4. Rubens, *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge*, oil sketch, 1622-3, private collection.

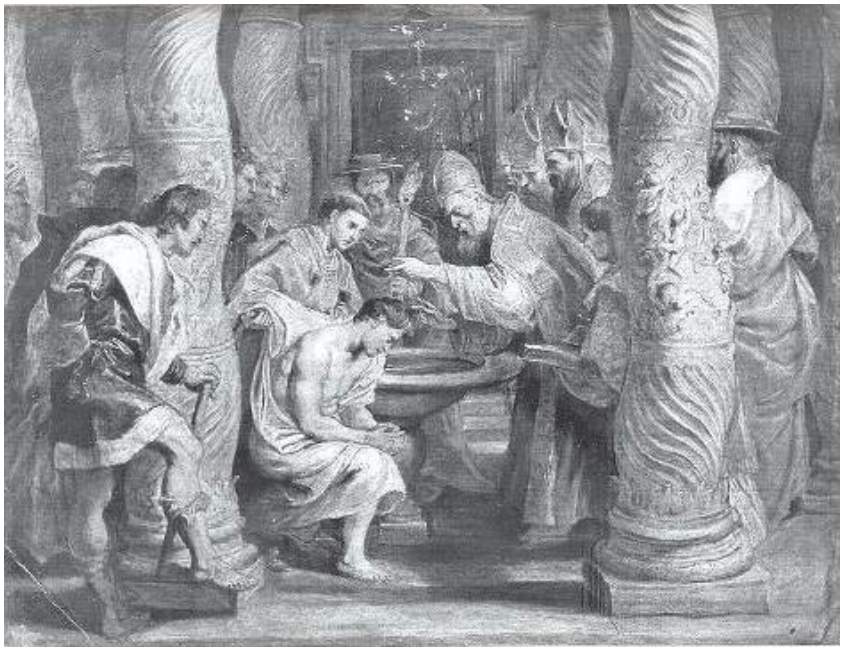
VI.5. Rubens, *The Entry into Rome*, oil sketch, 1622-3, private collection.

VI.6. Rubens, *Constantine and Crispus/Constantine appoints Constantine as his successor*, oil sketch, 1622-3, H. E. M. Benn, Haslemere.

VI.7. Rubens, *Land Campaign against Licinius*, oil sketch, 1623, Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri.

VI.8. Rubens, *The Trophy*, oil sketch, 1623, H. E. M. Benn, Haslemere.

VI.9. Rubens, *The Veneration of the Holy Cross*, oil sketch, private collection.



VI.10. Rubens, *The Baptism of Constantine*, oil sketch, Vicometesse de Noailess, Paris.

VI.11. Rubens, *The Foundation of Constantinople*, oil sketch, 1622, Staatliche Kunsthale Karlsruhe.

VI.12. Rubens, *The Death of Constantine*, oil sketch, 1622, private collection, Paris.

VI.13. Rubens, *The Triumph of Rome*, oil sketch, 1623, Mauritshuis, the Hague.

VI.14. *The Double Marriage of Constantine and Licinius*, tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.15. *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge* (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.16. *The Entry into Rome* (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.17. *The Veneration of the True Cross*, (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.18. *The Baptism of Constantine* (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.19. *The Foundation of Constantinople* (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.20. *The Death of Constantine* (Rubens), tapestry, ca 1623-1625, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.21. *Constantine fighting the lion* (Cortona), tapestry, 1637, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.22. *The Vision of the Cross* (Cortona), tapestry, 1633, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.23. *The Sea Battle* (Cortona), tapestry, 1635, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.24. *Constantine Burning of the Memorials* (Cortona), tapestry, 1634, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

VI.25. *Constantine destroying the idols* (Cortona), tapestry, 1637, The Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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VI.27. The Lateran Triclinium (present view).

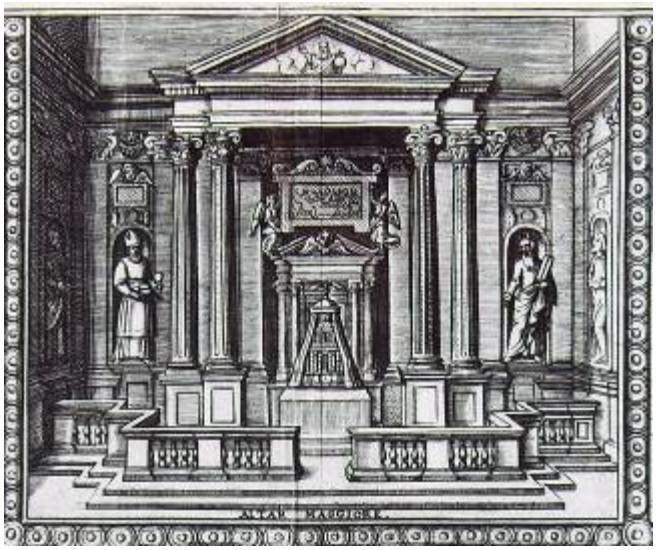
VI.28a. Matthaus Greuter, *Orthographia apsidis primariae et sinistrae*, from Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (Rome, 1625).

VI.28b. Matthaus Greuter, *Triclini Leoniani apsis primaria restituta*, from Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (Rome, 1625).

VI.29. Matthaus Greuter, *Orthographia apsidis primariae et sinistrae* (detail), from Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (Rome, 1625).

VI.30 .Matthaus Greuter, untitled, fol. 56 in Nicolò Alemanni, *De Lateranensibus Parientinis* (Rome, 1625).

VI.31. Frontispiece of Jean Morin, *Histoire de la déliverance de l'Eglise Chrestienne par l'empereur Constantin* (Paris, 1630).



VI.32. Giovanni Maggi, Matthaus Greuter, *S. Giovanni Laterano*. Detail: the Altar of the Sacrament. Rome, 1621.

VI.33. Alphonsius Ciaconius. *Vitae et Gesta Summorum Pontificum* (Rome, 1677), *Capella del Presepio (*the *Nativity*), Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.

VI.34. Colonna della Pace, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.

VI.35. *Paul V Pont. Max. Numismata* (detaili) in Alphonsius Ciaconius, *Vitae, et res gestae pontificum romanorum et S.R.E* (Rome, 1630).

VI.36. Francesco Angeloni, *Historia Augusta* (Coins illustrating the Constantinian period), Rome, 1641.

VI.37. Barberini Palace, Rome.

VI.38. Barberini Palace, *Gran Salone* with Pietro da Cortona's *Triumph of Divine Providence* (1632-1639), Rome.

VI.39. Bernini, the *Baldachin* and one of the four altars of the crossing (St. Helena's), 1624-1633, St. Peter's, the Vatican City.

VI.40. Giovanni Francesco Romanelli, *The Donation of Countess Matild*a, Sala di Matilda, the Vatican, fresco, ca. 1638.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Memorie di papa Gregori XIII, Fondo Boncompagni Ludovisi, D 5, fol. 272-5, BAV. (The document has been partially published by Ludwig Pastor and subsequently, in the same format, by Ralf Quednau. Ludwig Pastor consulted the document when it was still in the possession of the Boncompagni family archive).

La felice memoria di Papa Gregorio XIIJ fece venire in Roma il medesimo Tomaso Laureti per depinger la volta della Sala Costantina, et havendo egli anco assunto di far l'inventioni li venne in animo di far attioni del medesimo Imperador, et in particolare quello, ehi fece in honore, e beneficio di S.ta Chiesa, et havendo esso Tomaso vista in una delle pariete della medesima sala la donatione d'Italia fatta da Costantino à san Silvestro, e suoi successori rapresentata per una figuretta non molto inteligibile pensò di fare l'istessa italia distinta in otto provincie secondo l'ordine de Stabone per più intelligenza d ital donatione. Pero fece nelle quattro pedocci della volta essi provincie, à dua per pedoccio, e prima la Liguria con la Toscana, appresso la Romana, e la Napolitana, sequendo la Locanca, con la Puglia, et ultimam.te il Piceno con Venetia tutto fatto on figura de donna con doi puttini per ciascheduna, chi tengono l'uno l'insegni e proprietà del paesi, l'altro l'iscrittione, nelli mezzi tondi piccolo ò sordele, chi chiamano alcuni della professione per l'in conto delli finestri là dipinti la Corsica, e Secilia pure adornati di puttini chi tengono medesimamente insegni, e dsescrizioni, nelli mezzi tondi Grandi la fatti li tre corpi del mondo con le sue inscrittioni, cioè l'Europa, l'Asia, e l'Africa. Nelli quattro angoli della volta son depinti doi arme d'essa felice memeria e doe ombreli insegna di Santa Chiesa quali tutti son'accompagnati da due virtue con le sue inscrittioni, e prima la vigilanza e sapienza chi tenengono in mezzo una dell'armi appreso la benignità, e clemenza da i lati di una dell'ombrele la liberalità e Magnificenza tengon in mezzo l'altra arma, si come la sincerità e Concordia l'altra ombrella. Nelle luneti della volta si son depinti alcuni puttini in scoccio con arte di prospettiva, chi tengono alcuni ornamento imperiale come il Regno, la mitra, la corona, lo scetro, le vesti purpuree lo stucco, e speron d'oro, et altri ornamenti che dimostrano la dignita, e facoltà lasciata da Costantino à San Silvestro e suoi successori.
E perche nelle parieti della medesima Sala vi son depinte in forma di Done le quattro principali virtù, non parso as esso Tomaso farli anco nella volta, per non se vedere soto e sopra una medessima cosa, mà conoscendo egli tali virtue esser proprie della d.a fel. me li venerà considerazione di farle a modo di embleme senza alcun moto. Però fece in quattro

triangoletti, che fan l'ornamento della volta, un globo della mondo Terra per ciascheduno in mezzo a doi serpenti, chi tengono doi timoni lo sostengono, sopra il primo hà fatto un specchio, al 2.0 una spada la bilancia, al 3.o, un leone, e sopra il quarto la buglia, volendo dimostrare che la fe. Me. di Papa Gegorio xiij governò beniss.o il Mondo con prudenza, giusticia, fortezza, e temperanza.
Nel mezzo della volta pensò di dipingere quella degna attion del Costantino quando commando che per tutte le parti del suo imperio si gettassero à tera gl'Idoli, e s'adorassi xpo Nro. Redentore mà essendo piacciuto al Sig.r di lirar à s.o quell'anma benedetta il norato Tomasso ni la possoto far' adornata di figure come desiderava pe non esserli stato concesso dal Succerrore d'essa fel. mem mà nonidimeno fece in quell luogo una prospettiva d'un tempio in mezzo al quale un'altare con un crocifisso e per terra una statua di Mercurio fiacassata, che significano la med.ma intentione.

Inscrittione dell'otto Provincie et p.o

Liguris darus in armis genus
Hetrusca disciplina
Victor gentium Romanum
Campanus ficilato foebe
Bifirus flore Lucanus
Frumento latus Appulus
Fructificus arbore Picenus
Gaudit libertati Veneti

Inscrittione della Corsica e Sicilia

Ciniorum fortior bella pectora
Siciliam frugum faecundissima claris semper armor háec studio, viris, nobilissimegs atrium inventoribus longi pia stantrissimi.

Inscrittione delli trè parti del Mondo

Molto à fl. Constantino mango ecclesia in europa edificata , à quo Licinius in crucis signo victus sua in Christianos immanitatis, poenas dedit
Costantini opera xpus, et à Mre Helena cruce inventa in Asia adorantur ariana heresies damnatur.
Constantini pietati Religionis studio xpana fiede in Africa amplificatur

Inscrittioni dell'otto Virtù

Summi Principis pracipue virtutis perpetua vigilantia, ac Sapientia
Benignitas, et Clementia infidels as S.ta Ecclesia obedientiam allicit.
Ad pauperes sublenandos, et templa exornanda egrigra optimi Principis liberalitati opus est, ac magnificentia
Animi synceritas subiectis Concordia gignit.

Appendix 2

"Patrimonia Sancti Petri, nel Principium Donationes," *Miscellanea Ecclessiastici*, Fondo Boncompagni Ludovisi, C7, fol. 65-72

Patrimonia Sancti Petri, nel Principium Donationes

Constantinus Imperator, et aliquot sequentes Impe.res: usq ad Iustinianum Aug. quorum distincta ratio. Haberi hac patrimonia S.to Petro et Sedi Ap.ca: Urbis Roma donarunt.
Patrimonium siculum evius Rector Diaconus S.Re
Patrimonium Syracusanum, evius Rector not.s Sedis Ap.cl
Patrimonium Panormitanum evius Rector Defensor S.Re.
Patrimon'Apulum evius Rector not.s Sedis
Primonium Samniticum evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Patrimonium Neapolitanum evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Prinomium Campagna evius Rector subdiaconus S.R.E.
Primonium Thuseum evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Patrimonium Sabinus evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Primonium Nursinum evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Patrimonium Carseolanum evius Rector Defensor S.R.E.
Patrimonium Appium evius Rector subdiaconus S.R.E.
Patrimonium Ravenn' evius Rector Chartularius S.R.E.
Patrimonium Carseolanum evius Rector not.s Sedis Ap.ca
Patrimonium Dalmaticum evius Rector subdiaconus S.R.E.
Patrimonium Illyricianum evius Rector not.s Sedis Ap.ca
Patrimonium Sardinia evius rector defensor S.R.E.
Patrimonium Corsicarum evius Rector not.s Sedis Ap.ca
Patrimonium Pigurinum evius not.s Sedis Ap.ca
Patrimonium Alpium Cotti ar evius rector defensor
Patrimonium Germaniciarum evius rector notarius Sedis Ap.ca
Patrimonium Gallicanum evius rector pbr' S.R.E.
Aribertus Rex Longobardorum donationem Patrimonij Alpium Cottia az, que quodam pertinuerant ad Ap.ca sedem sed à Longobardi multos tempore fuerant ablate, restituit, et hane donationem exaratam lris. Romam miset.

Luitprandus longobardorum Rex donationem Patrimonij Alpium Cottiaz Rom Ecc.a confirmavit

Pipinus Francorum Rex Carloli magni Pater donavit ecc.a Romana et Beato Petro et Stephano pp ij Aemiliam Pic/renumet Umbriam Provincias, quas de Longobardi recuperat easq Longobardi Paolo ante Imp.ri Graeco eripuerant sub eorum Rege Ristulfo, sunt et Urbes hae Ravenna, Ariminum, Pisauru, Conca, Fanum, Cesena, Senogallia, esis Forum Pompilij, Forum Iulij, eum Castro Susubrum, Mons Feltri, Acerra, Agromos, Mons Lucati…. Et alia multa, et omnia quecunq ad eam diem

Longobardi invadere non potuerant

Idem Papa Stephanus ij ex auctoritate Pipipi receipt a Longobardum Regeo Desiderio alias Civitates quas de exarcatu tenebat vs Faventiam, Tiberiacum, Castrum, Caballum, Ferrariam cum sum suo Duca tu integrano.

Carolus Magnus Impr. Longob. Extineto desiderio multar ex superioribus Civitatibus a longobardis ablates restituit pp. Adriano p.o et S. Petro et de novo hei adiecit Terram Alaminis Instulam, Corsicam, Surianum, Montebordone, Berrectum, Parman, Regium mantuam , Montes Silicis, Ducatum Spoletanum, et Beneventanum, Provincias Istiam et Venetias.

Hoc omnia unico privilegio confirmavit Lud.s Prius Caroli Imp.r filius vivus exemplum apud meest.

Donavit etiam de novo bel confirmavit pp Paschali hoc in Tuscia mediterranea, urbem veterem , Baleneoregium, Viterbium, Surentum, Populonium, Rosellas, Perusiam, Marturanu,. Sutrium, Nepa, Campaniam, Ananiam, Signiam, Jerentum, Alatrum, Patricum, exariatum Ravenna entegrum quod Pr et Avus S. Petro concessit In Campania, (etc).

1115 Multa ex his qua posteriori tempore nel ablata fuerant in nel ex Concesione.

Pontificem restituta sunt, Marhildae Concitissa restituit nel donavit Pro ecc.a Parmam, Regium, Mutinam, Mantuam, Ferrariam cum pertinen' suis, et alia multa tamin Thusia gs il Ligutia

1274 Rodulphus Imper.r restituit exareatum Ravenna, quem Leo Papa VIIJ concesserat otboni p.o et suis successoribus Imp.bus Roberto Guiscardus pp Nic.o II primus homnium homagius fecit de Regno Siciliae is Pharum, quod tume Ducatus Apulia, et Calabrie dicebatur.

1140 Rogerius eius frater p. s Rex utriusg Sicilie primum omagium fecit de utoqs Regno Inn.o ij

Otho p.s Imp.or

Henricus ij et V Imp. Confirmaverunt suis privilegij.

920 Otho Imperator cum Ioanne Papa.

Rogeris Roberti Guiscardi

Otto iij Imp.r fecit novam concessionem…. A Silvestro ij

Petrus Rex Aragonum donavit Regnuum sum Innoc. Iij…. Ligurium et Gomagrum.

Ioannes Rex Anglorum … donavit regnum suuum Inn iij et id in Feudum recepit

Ecc.a Rom. In Regno Francie ex donatione Caroli Magni habere debet proqualibet domo denarium annum unu. Carolus Magnus donavit ecc.a Rom schiavoniam ab eo nuper acquistam eamgs in feudum recepit cum solution ne denarij annui

Regnum Hungaria donatum ecc.a Rom, cum consensus procerum a Stephano…in feudum recepit

Omnia Hispania Regna que tuneunum errant Rom. Ecc.a donata, a Regibus gothis in feudum recepta.

Regnum Dacia donatum fuit Rom. Ecc.a atgs receptum cum annuo censu a Rege

Regnum Ruscia….receptum in feudam cum anno censu. Regna Croatia et Dalmatia donate acc.a Rom. et Greg. Vij a Demetrio rege
et recepta in feudum sum solutione annui tributi.

Regnum Portugallia est. Rom. Ecc.a ipsi oblatum ab Adelphonso Duce Portugallio sub Alexij XIIj…in feudam cum solutione annui tribute iiij

Regnum Bohemia… Nic.o PP ij… receptum cum annuo censu e librarum argenti.

Ferdinandus Rex Hispa donavit Rom. Ecc.a Castrum Thosase sub Clem pp iij cum pertinem suis.

Bernegarius Raimunsdi … donavit totum Comiatatum sum…in feudem …Urbano ij.

Comiatus Urgelen' in Cathalonia est Rom. Ecc.a donatus….Alex iij recepitusq in feudem…

Mons Pessualunus… Inn iijcum censuduarum marcarum auri singulis annis Regnum Norvegiae

Regnum Sveviae etdem.

Regnum Dacia donatum Paschalij ij cum annua solutione denari.

Regnum anglia ab antiguo, et ante Io. Regnum…denarum annuum pro qualibet domo S. Petro.

Rex Insularum Anglia reginaldus donavit… Insulam Marij eamgs in feudam retenivet..

Fridiricus Ij Imperator donavir Inn iij Comitatum Fundanum cum pertinentij suis et omnem terram eis Galrianum.

Henricu Imperator ij…. Confirmavit Benedecto viij

Robertus Guiscardus … Sicilia

Rex Polonia.. anno 1197 se sub Rom. ecc.a protection posuit.

Dux Portugallio qui ab Adriano iiij factus est Rex ex annuo censutera sua

Terracina pulsis Fregepanibus se Inn iij dedit.

Praefectura Urbis ab abtiquo iuris est nom. ecc.a

Tenetugs Prefectus Urbis iurare fideliter dno Papa.

Appendix 3

Donazione di Costantino Imperatore e di altri principi et di homaggi alla Santa Sede, Chigiani G.III. 67, fol. 1-207

Fol. 1-12 *Donatio Constantini Imperatoris in favorem Sancta Romana Ecclesia*

Fol. 13-16 *Sequntur donations multorum Regnum Sancta Romane Ecclesia*

Fol.13: Et primo uidentum est qualiter Sanctissimus dominus Emperator Constantinus magnificavit, nobilitavit, et donavit Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia pro ut ingestis Beati Sylvestri.

Fol. 13r: Item sequuntum Privilegia Ludovici Emperaatoris super pradictis Regalibus confirmatis tempore Papa Pascalis…Item seguitur Privilegium Iberici Primi Imperatoris supra Regalibus Beatro Petro concessis

Fol. 16r-18: *Seguitur privilegium Henrici super eadem.*

Fol. 16r: In nomina sancta, et individual Trinitatis. Ego Henricus Dei gratia Augustus, pro amore Dei, et Sancta Romana Ecclesiae , et Domini Papa Calyxto, et pro remedio anima mea …

Fol. 18r-30: *Item seguitur Privilegium Henrici Imperatoris de Regalibus Beato Petro Concessis.*

Fol. 18r: In nomine Dei omnipotentis Patris, et filij, et Sprirus Sancto. Ego Henricus Dei Gratia Imperator Augustus, spondee atque promieto per hoc pactum confirmationis nostra tibi Beato Petro Principi Apostolorum, et Clavigeri Regni Coelorum. ….qua quondam pia recordationis dominus Pepinus, et dominus Carolus, et dominus Ludovicus, et Otho, et ibidem Otho Filius praedecesores nostril … and lands.

Fol. 30r-66: *Seguitur de denario Beatii Petri in Francia*

Fol. 32….Item regnum Ungaria
Fol. 35 r: Item omnia Regna Hispania
Fol. 37r: Item Regnu Aragoniae fuit datum Sacrosanta Romana Ecclesia sub cero censer. Petrus Rex Aragoniae.
Item Ferdinandus Hispaniarum Rex
Fol. 43. Item Beregurgus Raymundi Comes Barchionesium
Fol. 55 Item Regnu Portugalia
Fol. 55 r: Item Regnum Bohemiae
Fol. 56: Item Regnum Anglicae.

Fol. 66r: *Denaius Beato Petro praedictus per hunc modus colligitur in Anglia*, et Caritatem diec. VII. lib. Xviii. Sol.

Document signed: Decimo Calendas Octobris, Anno Domini Millesimi Biscentessimo Decimo Nono. Et nè super his posit alliquando dubitari has litera fieri fecimus. Et sigillo nostro numita.

Fol. 82: *De confirmatione doantionis Patrimonij Alpium Cotiarium Beatro Petro.*

Fol. 82r: *Sequntur Patrimonia Sancti Petri, vel Principum donations.*

Marginal note: ex Registro Epistolari S. Gregorij PP, et lib. 2 :

Constantinus Imperatores et aliquot sequentes Imperatores, usque ad Iustinianum Augustum, quarum distincta ratio haberi non potest, ha patrimonio Sancto Petro, et Sedi Apostolicae Urbis Roma donarunt.

Patrimoni …

Fol. 86: Pipinus fu ancorum Rex Caroli Magni Pater donavit ecclesia Romana…

Fol. 87r: Idem Carolus Magnus donavit Ecclesiae Romana…(Registro Gregorio 8)

Regnum Ungaria donatum Ecclesia Romana….
Ominia Hispagna Regna…
Regnum Dacia Donatum …. (Alex. 3. in Registro).
Regnum Russia
Regna Croatia, et Dalmatia
Regnum Portugallia
Regnum Boemia
Regnum Norvegia
Regnum Svetie
Genovenses pro Insula Corsica.
Carolus Magnus Impereator Longobardorum extinto desiderio Rege….(et Bibliothec. Anno 774)

1119 Multa ex ijs, que posteriori tempore nel oblate furantvi, nel ex concessione Ponefici restitute sunt Mathisldis Comitissa restituit…

1274 Rodolphos Imperator
1060 Robertus Guiscardus Papa Nicholae Secundo
1140 Rogerius eius frater Primus Rex utriusque Sicilia
962 et 970 Henricus Secundus, et Quintus et Otho Primus Imperatores.

Then no year in front of the entries:
Rogerius Roberti Guiscardi
Otho Tertius Imperator
Petrus Rex Aragonum
Regno Anglicae ab antique, est ante Ioannem Regem est Romana ecclesia
Rex Insularum Anglia Reginaldus donavit Romana ecclesia Insulam.
Federicus Secundus Imperator donavit Innocentio Tertio. (Ex privilegio eius).
Henricus Primus Imperator Secundus Rex Romanorum
Rex Polonia.. Anno Millesimo Centesimo
Dux Portugallia, qui ab Adriano Quarto.

Fol.97. *De Iurisdictione Romana Ecclesia super Regnum Apulia et Sicilia.*

Omissa donatione Constantini Imperatoris de eisdem Regnis, de qua superius satis dictum est, sicut etiam de concessione, seu restitutione Caroli Magni, qui conquissivit Terram illam à Saracenis, sicut etiam quando vevit in adiutorium ecclesia, contra desiderium Regem longobardorum.

Fol. 114r: *Sequitur Infeudatio Regni Siciliae per dominum Clementem Papam Quartu.*
Fol. 175. *Incipit modus faciendi Homagium Domino Pape de Regno Sicilie qunado confertur Regi*.
Fol. 201r: *Transumptum quarundam Literarum Apostolicarum Leonis Papae Decimi super dispensatione Carolo V Imperat.re et Regi Siciliae concessa*.

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*** *Avvisi*, Urb. 1060, I, BAV

*** *Avvisi*, Urb.1062, I, BAV

*** *Avvisi*, Urb.1067, BAV

*** Camerale I, Busta 1528, ASR.

*** Camerale I, *Fabbriche*, b. 1537, ASR.

******* Camerale I, *Fabbriche*, 1542, ASR.

*** *Discorso critico sul Costantino messo all Berlina, ovvero Bernina su la Porta di San Pietro.* Barb. Lat. 4331; Chigi I.VII. 270, fol. 1-132v.

*** *Donatio Constantini Imperatoris semper Augusti facta in favorem Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae. cod. card. in f.o del sec XVII.* Barb. Lat. 2595

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*** *Fede di Costantino Imperatore, e copia del privilegio che fece a S. Silvestro Papa della città di Roma*, Vat. lat. 8744, fol. 23-33, BAV.

*** *Il Costantino del Sig.re Cavalier Bernino Difeso*, Chigi I.VII. 270, Fol. 133-145

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*** *Memorie di papa Gregori XIII*, Archvio Boncompagni, D 5, BAV, fol. 79

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